

THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
LORD BYRON



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HOURS OF IDLENESS

A SERIES OF POEMS ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED

[First published in 1807]

'*Virginibus puerisque canto.*'—HORACE, lib. iii, Ode 1.

'*Μῆν' ἄρ' με μάλ' αἰεε, μήτε τι νείκελ.*'—HOMER, *Iliad*, x. 249.

'He whistled as he went, for want of thought.'—DRYDEN.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IN submitting to the public eye the following collection, I have not only to combat the difficulties that writers of verse generally encounter, but may incur the charge of presumption for obtruding myself on the world, when, without doubt, I might be, at my age, more usefully employed.

These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours of a young man who has lately completed his nineteenth year. As they bear the internal evidence of a boyish mind, this is, perhaps, unnecessary information. Some few were written during the disadvantages of illness and depression of spirits: under the former influence, 'CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS,' in particular, were composed. This consideration, though it cannot excite the voice of praise, may at least arrest the arm of censure. A considerable portion of these poems has been privately printed, at the request and for the perusal of my friends. I am sensible that the partial and frequently injudicious admiration of a social circle is not the criterion by which poetical genius is to be estimated, yet 'to do greatly' we must 'dare greatly'; and I have hazarded my reputation and feelings in publishing this volume. I have 'passed the Rubicon,' and must stand or fall by the 'cast of the die.' In the latter event I shall submit without a murmur; for, though not without solicitude for the fate of these effusions, my expectations are by no means sanguine. It is probable that I may have dared much and done little; for, in the words of Cowper, 'it is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biassed in our favour, and another to write what may please everybody; because they who have no connexion, or even knowledge of the author, will be sure to find fault if they can.' To the truth of this, however, I do not wholly subscribe; on the contrary, I feel convinced that these trifles will not be treated with injustice. Their merit, if they possess any, will be liberally allowed; their numerous faults, on the other hand, cannot expect that favour which has been denied to others of maturer years, decided character, and far greater ability.

I have not aimed at exclusive originality, still less have I studied any particular model for imitation; some translations are given, of which many are paraphrastic. In the original pieces there may appear a casual coincidence with authors whose works I have been accustomed to read; but I have not been guilty of intentional plagiarism. To produce anything entirely new, in an age so fertile in rhyme, would be a Herculean task, as every subject has already been treated to its utmost extent. Poetry, however, is not my primary vocation; to divert the dull moments of indisposition, or the monotony of a vacant hour, urged me 'to this sin': little can be expected from so unpromising a muse. My wreath, scanty as it must be, is all I shall derive from these productions; and I shall never attempt to replace its fading leaves, or pluck a single additional sprig from groves where I am, at best, an intruder. Though accustomed, in my younger days, to rove a careless mountaineer on the Highlands of Scotland, I have not, of late years, had the benefit of such pure air, or so elevated a residence, as might enable me to enter the lists with genuine bards, who have enjoyed both these advantages. But they derive considerable fame, and a few not less profit, from their productions; while I shall expiate my rashness as an interloper, certainly without the latter, and in all probability with a very slight share of the former. I leave to others '*virūm volitare per ora.*' I look to the few who will hear with patience, '*dulce est desipere in loco.*' To the former worthies I resign, without repining, the hope of immortality, and content myself with the not very magnificent prospect of ranking amongst 'the mob of gentlemen who write';—my readers must determine whether I dare say 'with ease,' or the honour of a posthumous page in '*The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,*'—a work to which the Peerage is under infinite obligations, inasmuch as many names of considerable length, sound, and antiquity, are thereby rescued from the obscurity which unluckily overshadows several voluminous productions of their illustrious bearers.

With slight hopes, and some fears, I publish this first and last attempt. To the dictates of young ambition may be ascribed many actions more criminal and equally absurd. To a few of my own age the contents may afford amusement; I trust they will, at least, be found harmless. It is highly

HOURS OF IDLENESS

improbable, from my situation and pursuits hereafter, that I should ever obtrude myself a second time on the public; nor even, in the very doubtful event of present indulgence, shall I be tempted to commit a future trespass of the same nature. The opinion of Dr. Johnson on the poems of a noble relation of mine*, 'That when a man of rank appeared in the character of an author, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed,' can have little weight with verbal, and still less with periodical, censors; but were it otherwise, I should be loth to avail myself of the privilege, and would rather incur the bitterest censure of anonymous criticism, than triumph in honours granted solely to a title.

* The Earl of Carlisle, whose works have long received the meed of public applause, to which, by their intrinsic worth, they were well entitled.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK, EARL OF CARLISLE,

KNIGHT OF THE GARTER, ETC., ETC.,

THE SECOND EDITION OF THESE POEMS IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED WARD AND AFFECTIONATE KINSMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY

Cousin to the Author, and very dear to him.

HUSH'd are the winds, and still the evening gloom,
Not e'en a zephyr wanders through the grove,
Whilst I return, to view my Margaret's tomb,
And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
That clay, where once such animation beam'd;

The King of Terrors seized her as his prey,
Not worth nor beauty have her life redeem'd.

Oh! could that King of Terrors pity feel,
Or Heaven reverse the dread decrees of fate,

Not here the mourner would his grief reveal,
Not here the muse her virtues would relate.

But wherefore weep? Her matchless spirit soars
Beyond where splendid shines the orb of day;

And weeping angels lead her to those bowers
Where endless pleasures virtue's deeds repay.

And shall presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign,
And, madly, godlike Providence accuse?

Ah! no, far fly from me attempts so vain;—
I'll ne'er submission to my God refuse.

Yet is remembrance of those virtues dear,
Yet fresh the memory of that beauteous face;
Still they call forth my warm affection's tear,
Still in my heart retain their wonted place.

1802.

TO E—

LET Folly smile, to view the names
Of thee and me in friendship twined;
Yet Virtue will have greater claims
To love, than rank with vice combined.

And though unequal is thy fate,
Since title deck'd my higher birth!
Yet envy not this gaudy state;
Thine is the pride of modest worth.

Our souls at least congenial meet,
Nor can thy lot my rank disgrace;
Our intercourse is not less sweet,
Since worth of rank supplies the place.

November 1802.

TO D—

IN thee I fondly hoped to clasp
A friend whom death alone could sever;
Till envy, with malignant grasp,
Detach'd thee from my breast for ever.

True, she has forced thee from my breast,
Yet in my heart thou keep'st thy seat;
There, there thine image still must rest,
Until that heart shall cease to beat.

And when the grave restores her dead,
When life again to dust is given,
On thy dear breast I'll lay my head—
Without thee where would be my heaven?

February 1803.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

EPITAPH ON A FRIEND

** Ἀσπὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμνες ἐν ζωοταῖσι εἶδος.*

LAERT.

OH, Friend! for ever loved, for ever dear!
What fruitless tears have bathed thy
honour'd bier!

What sighs re-echo'd to thy parting breath,
Whilst thou wast struggling in the pangs
of death!

Could tears retard the tyrant in his
course;

Could sighs avert his dart's relentless
force;

Could youth and virtue claim a short
delay,

Or beauty charm the spectre from his
prey;

Thou still hadst lived to bless my aching
sight,

Thy comrade's honour and thy friend's
delight.

If yet thy gentle spirit hover nigh
The spot where now thy mouldering
ashes lie,

Here wilt thou read, recorded on my
heart,

A grief too deep to trust the sculptor's art.
No marble marks thy couch of lowly
sleep,

But living statues there are seen to weep;
Affliction's semblance bends not o'er thy
tomb,

Affliction's self deplores thy youthful
doom.

What though thy sire lament his failing
line,

A father's sorrows cannot equal mine!
Though none, like thee, his dying hour
will cheer,

Yet other offspring soothe his anguish
here:

But who with me shall hold thy former
place?

Thine image what new friendship can
efface?

Ah, none!—a father's tears will cease to
flow,

Time will assuage an infant brother's woe;
To all, save one, is consolation known,
While solitary friendship sighs alone.

1803.

A FRAGMENT

WHEN, to their airy hall, my fathers' voice
Shall call my spirit, joyful in their choice;

When, poised upon the gale, my form
shall ride,

Or, dark in mist, descend the mountain's
side;

Oh! may my shade behold no sculptured
urns,

To mark the spot where earth to earth
returns!

No lengthen'd scroll, no praise-encum-
ber'd stone;

My epitaph shall be my name alone:
If *that* with honour fail to crown my clay,

Oh! may no other fame my deeds repay!
That, only *that*, shall single out the spot;

By that remember'd, or with that forgot.

1803.

ON LEAVING NEWSTEAD ABBEY

'Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged
days? Thou lookest from thy tower to-day: yet
a few years, and the blast of the desert comes, it
howls in thy empty court'—OSSIAN.

THROUGH thy battlements, Newstead,
the hollow winds whistle;

Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone
to decay;

In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock
and thistle

Have choked up the rose which late
bloom'd in the way.

Of the mail-cover'd Barons, who proudly
to battle

Led their vassals from Europe to
Palestine's plain,

The escutcheon and shield, which with
every blast rattle,

Are the only sad vestiges now that remain.

No more doth old Robert, with harp-
stringing numbers,

Raise a flame in the breast for the war-
laurel'd wreath;

Near Askalon's towers, John of Horistan
slumbers,

Unnerv'd is the hand of his minstrel by
death.

Paul and Hubert, too, sleep in the valley
of Cressy;

For the safety of Edward and England
they fell:

My fathers! the tears of your country re-
dress ye;

How you fought, how you died, still her
annals can tell.

On Marston, with Rupert, 'gainst traitors
contending,

Four brothers enrich'd with their blood
the bleak field;

For the rights of a monarch their country
defending,

Till death their attachment to royalty
seal'd.

Shades of heroes, farewell! your descen-
dant, departing

From the seat of his ancestors, bids you
adieu!

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Abroad, or at home, your remembrance
imparting
New courage, he'll think upon glory
and you.

Though a tear dim his eye at this sad
separation,
'Tis nature, not fear, that excites his
regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emula-
tion,
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can
forget.

That fame, and that memory, still will he
cherish;
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace
your renown:
Like you will he live, or like you will he
perish;
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust
with your own!

1803.

LINES

WRITTEN IN 'LETTERS OF AN ITALIAN NUN
AND AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN: BY J. J.
ROUSSEAU: FOUNDED ON FACTS.'

'AWAY, away, your flattering arts
May now betray some simpler hearts;
And you will smile at their believing,
And they shall weep at your deceiving.'

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING, ADDRESSED TO
MISS —.

Dear, simple girl, those flattering arts,
From which thou'dst guard frail female
hearts,

Exist but in imagination,—
Mere phantoms of thine own creation;
For he who views that witching grace, 5
That perfect form, that lovely face,
With eyes admiring, oh! believe me,
He never wishes to deceive thee:
Once in thy polish'd mirror glance,
Thou'lt there descry that elegance 10
Which from our sex demands such praises,
But envy in the other raises:
Then he who tells thee of thy beauty,
Believe me, only does his duty:
Ah! fly not from the candid youth; 15
It is not flattery,—'tis truth.

July 1804.

ADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL WHEN DYING

[ANIMULA! vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca—
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?]

AH! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,

Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay, 5
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

AD LESBIAM

EQUAL to Jove that youth must be—
Greater than Jove he seems to me—
Who, free from Jealousy's alarms,
Securely views thy matchless charms.
That cheek, which ever dimpling glows, 5
That mouth, from whence such music
flows,

To him, alike, are always known,
Reserved for him, and him alone.
Ah! Lesbia! though 'tis death to me,
I cannot choose but look on thee; 10
But, at the sight, my senses fly;
I needs must gaze, but, gazing, die;
Whilst trembling with a thousand fears,
Parch'd to the throat my tongue adheres,
My pulse beats quick, my breath heaves
short, 15

My limbs deny their slight support,
Cold dews my pallid face o'erspread,
With deadly languor droops my head,
My ears with tingling echoes ring,
And life itself is on the wing; 20
My eyes refuse the cheering light,
Their orbs are veil'd in starless night:
Such pangs my nature sinks beneath,
And feels a temporary death.

TRANSLATION OF THE EPITAPH ON VIRGIL AND TIBULLUS

BY DOMITIUS MARSUS

He who sublime in epic numbers roll'd,
And he who struck the softer lyre of
love,
By Death's unequal hand alike controll'd,
Fit comrades in Elysian regions move!

IMITATION OF TIBULLUS

'Sulpicia ad Cerinthus.'—*Lib. iv.*

CRUEL Cerinthus! does the fell disease
Which racks my breast your fickle bosom
please?

Alas! I wish'd but to o'ercome the pain,
That I might live for love and you again;
But now I scarcely shall bewail my fate:
By death alone I can avoid your hate.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

[Lugete, Veneres, Cupidinesque, &c.]

YE Cupids, droop each little head,
Nor let your wings with joy be spread;
My Lesbia's favourite bird is dead,
Whom dearer than her eyes she loved:

HOURS OF IDLENESS

For he was gentle, and so true, 5
Obedient to her call he flew,
No fear, no wild alarm he knew,
But lightly o'er her bosom moved:

And softly fluttering here and there,
He never sought to cleave the air, 10
But chirrup'd oft, and, free from care,
Tuned to her ear his grateful strain.
Now having pass'd the gloomy bourn
From whence he never can return,
His death and Lesbia's grief I mourn, 15
Who sighs, alas! but sighs in vain.

Oh! curst be thou, devouring grave!
Whose jaws eternal victims crave,
From whom no earthly power can save,
For thou hast ta'en the bird away: 20
From thee my Lesbia's eyes o'erflow,
Her swollen cheeks with weeping glow;
Thou art the cause of all her woe,
Receptacle of life's decay.

IMITATED FROM CATULLUS

TO ELLEN

OH! might I kiss those eyes of fire,
A million scarce would quench desire:
Still would I steep my lips in bliss,
And dwell an age on every kiss:
Nor then my soul should sated be; 5
Still would I kiss and cling to thee:
Nought should my kiss from thine dis-

sever:
Still would we kiss and kiss for ever;
E'en though the numbers did exceed 10
The yellow harvest's countless seed.
To part would be a vain endeavour:
Could I desist?—ah! never—never!

TRANSLATION FROM HORACE

[Iustum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.]

THE man of firm and noble soul
No factious clamours can control;
No threat'ning tyrant's darkling brow
Can swerve him from his just intent:
Gales the warring waves which plough,
By Auster on the billows spent, 6
To curb the Adriatic main,
Would awe his fix'd, determined mind in
vain.

Ay, and the red right arm of Jove,
Hurling his lightnings from above, 10
With all his terrors there unfurl'd,
He would unmoved, unawed, behold.
The flames of an expiring world,
Again in crashing chaos roll'd,
In vast promiscuous ruin hurl'd, 15
Might light his glorious funeral pile:
Still dauntless 'midst the wreck of earth
he'd smile.

FROM ANACREON

[Θέλω λέγειν Ἀνρείδας, κ. τ. λ.]

I WISH to tune my quivering lyre
To deeds of fame and notes of fire;
To echo, from its rising swell,
How heroes fought and nations fell,
When Atreus' sons advanced to war,
Or Tyrian Cadmus roved afar; 6
But still, to martial strains unknown,
My lyre recurs to love alone.
Fired with the hope of future fame,
I seek some nobler hero's name; 10
The dying chords are strung anew,
To war, to war, my harp is due:
With glowing strings, the epic strain
To Jove's great son I raise again;
Alcides and his glorious deeds, 15
Beneath whose arm the Hydra bleeds.
All, all in vain; my wayward lyre
Wakes silver notes of soft desire.
Adieu, ye chiefs renown'd in arms!
Adieu the clang of war's alarms! 20
To other deeds my soul is strung,
And sweeter notes shall now be sung;
My harp shall all its powers reveal,
To tell the tale my heart must feel;
Love, love alone, my lyre shall claim,
In songs of bliss and sighs of flame. 26

FROM ANACREON

[Μεσονυκτίος ποθ' ὤραις, κ. τ. λ.]

'Twas now the hour when Night had
driven
Her car half round yon sable heaven;
Bootes, only, seem'd to roll
His arctic charge around the pole;
While mortals, lost in gentle sleep, 5
Forgot to smile, or ceased to weep:
At this lone hour the Paphian boy,
Descending from the realms of joy,
Quick to my gate directs his course,
And knocks with all his little force. 10
My visions fled, alarm'd I rose,—
'What stranger breaks my blest repose?'
'Alas!' replies the wily child,
In faltering accents sweetly mild,
'A hapless infant here I roam, 15
Far from my dear maternal home.
Oh! shield me from the wintry blast!
The nightly storm is pouring fast.
No prowling robber lingers here.
A wandering baby who can fear?' 20
I heard his seeming artless tale,
I heard his sighs upon the gale:
My breast was never pity's foe,
But felt for all the baby's woe.
I drew the bar, and by the light 25
Young Love, the infant, met my sight;
His bow across his shoulders flung,
And thence his fatal quiver hung
(Ah! little did I think the dart
Would rankle soon within my heart). 30

HOURS OF IDLENESS

With care I tend my weary guest,
His little fingers chill my breast;
His glossy curls, his azure wing,
Which droop with nightly showers,
I wring; 34
His shivering limbs the embers warm;
And now reviving from the storm,
Scarce had he felt his wonted glow,
Than swift he seized his slender bow:—
'I fain would know, my gentle host,'
He cried, 'if this its strength has lost; 40
I fear, relax'd with midnight dews,
The strings their former aid refuse.'
With poison tipped, his arrow flies,
Deep in my tortured heart it lies; 44
Then loud the joyous urchin laugh'd:—
'My bow can still impel the shaft:
'Tis firmly fix'd, thy sighs reveal it;
Say, courteous host, canst thou not feel
it?'

FROM THE PROMETHEUS VINCTUS OF ÆSCHYLUS

[Μηδῆμ' ὁ πόντος νέμων, κ. τ. λ.]

GREAT Jove, to whose almighty throne
Both gods and mortals homage pay,
Ne'er may my soul thy power disown,
Thy dread behests ne'er disobey.
Oft shall the sacred victim fall 5
In sea-girt Ocean's mossy hall;
My voice shall raise no impious strain
'Gainst him who rules the sky and azure
main.

How different now thy joyless fate,
Since first Hesiote thy bride, 10
When placed aloft in godlike state,
The blushing beauty by thy side,
Thou sat'st, while reverend Ocean
smiled,
And mirthful strains the hours beguiled;
The Nymphs and Tritons danced
around, 15
Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove
relentless frown'd.

HARROW, Dec. 1, 1804.

TO EMMA

SINCE now the hour is come at last,
When you must quit your anxious
lover;
Since now our dream of bliss is past,
One pang, my girl, and all is over.

Alas! that pang will be severe, 5
Which bids us part to meet no more;
Which tears me far from one so dear,
Departing for a distant shore.

Well! we have pass'd some happy hours,
And joy will mingle with our tears; 10
When thinking on these ancient towers,
The shelter of our infant years;

Where from this Gothic casement's
height,
We view'd the lake, the park, the dell,
And still, though tears obstruct our sight,
We lingering look a last farewell, 16

O'er fields through which we used to run,
And spend the hours in childish play;
O'er shades where, when our race was
done,
Reposing on my breast you lay; 20

Whilst I, admiring, too remiss,
Forgot to scare the hovering flies,
Yet envied every fly the kiss
It dared to give your slumbering eyes:

See still the little painted bark, 25
In which I row'd you o'er the lake;
See there, high waving o'er the park,
The elm I clamber'd for your sake.

These times are past—our joys are gone,
You leave me, leave this happy vale;
These scenes I must retrace alone: 31
Without thee what will they avail?

Who can conceive, who has not proved,
The anguish of a last embrace?
When, torn from all you fondly loved,
You bid a long adieu to peace. 36

This is the deepest of our woes,
For this these tears our cheeks bedew;
This is of love the final close,
Oh, God! the fondest, last adieu! 40

TO M. S. G.

WHEN'E'R I view those lips of thine,
Their hue invites my fervent kiss;
Yet I forego that bliss divine,
Alas! it were unhallow'd bliss.

When'e'r I dream of that pure breast, 5
How could I dwell upon its snows!
Yet is the daring wish repress,
For that—would banish its repose.

A glance from thy soul-searching eye
Can raise with hope, depress with fear;
Yet I conceal my love,—and why? 11
I would not force a painful tear.

I ne'er have told my love, yet thou
Hast seen my ardent flame too well;
And shall I plead my passion now, 15
To make thy bosom's heaven a hell?

No! for thou never canst be mine,
United by the priest's decree:
By any ties but those divine,
Mine, my beloved, thou ne'er shalt be.

Then let the secret fire consume, 21
Let it consume, thou shalt not know:
With joy I court a certain doom,
Rather than spread its guilty glow.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

I will not ease my tortured heart 25
By driving dove-eyed peace from thine;
Rather than such a sting impart,
Each thought presumptuous I resign.

Yes! yield those lips, for which I'd brave
More than I here shall dare to tell; 30
Thy innocence and mine to save,—
I bid thee now a last farewell.

Yes! yield that breast, to seek despair,
And hope no more thy soft embrace;
Which to obtain my soul would dare 35
All, all reproach, but thy disgrace.

At least from guilt shalt thou be free,
No matron shall thy shame reprove;
Though cureless pangs may prey on me,
No martyr shalt thou be to love. 40

TO CAROLINE

THINK'ST thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffused in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmoved thy plenteous sighs,
Which said far more than words can say?

Though keen the grief thy tears express, 5
When love and hope lay both o'er-
thrown,

Yet still, my girl, this bleeding breast
Throbb'd with deep sorrow as thine
own.

But when our cheeks with anguish glow'd,
When thy sweet lips were join'd to mine,
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd 11
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou couldst not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its
flame;

And as thy tongue essay'd to speak, 15
In signs alone it breathed my name.

And yet, my girl, we weep in vain,
In vain our fate in sighs deplore;
Remembrance only can remain,—
But that will make us weep the more.

Again, thou best beloved, adieu! 21
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret;
Nor let thy mind past joys review,—
Our only hope is to forget!

TO CAROLINE

WHEN I hear you express an affection so
warm,
Ne'er think, my beloved, that I do not
believe;
For your lip would the soul of suspicion
disarm,
And your eye beams a ray which can
never deceive.

Yet still this fond bosom regrets, while
adoring, 5
That love, like the leaf, must fall into
the sere;

That age will come on, when remem-
brance, deploring,
Contemplates the scenes of her youth
with a tear;

That the time must arrive, when, no
longer retaining
Their auburn, those locks must wave
thin to the breeze, 10
When a few silver hairs of those tresses
remaining,
Prove nature a prey to decay and
disease.

'Tis this, my beloved, which spreads
gloom o'er my features,
Though I ne'er shall presume to
arraign the decree
Which God has proclaim'd as the fate of
his creatures, 15
In the death which one day will deprive
you of me.

Mistake not, sweet sceptic, the cause of
emotion,
No doubt can the mind of your lover
invade;
He worships each look with such faithful
devotion,
A smile can enchant, or a tear can dis-
suade. 20

But as death, my beloved, soon or late
shall o'ertake us,
And our breasts, which alive with such
sympathy glow,
Will sleep in the grave till the blast shall
awake us,
When calling the dead, in earth's
bosom laid low,—

Oh! then let us drain, while we may,
draughts of pleasure, 25
Which from passion like ours may un-
ceasingly flow;
Let us pass round the cup of love's bliss
in full measure,
And quaff the contents as our nectar
below.

1805.

TO CAROLINE

OH! when shall the grave hide for ever my
sorrow?
Oh! when shall my soul wing her flight
from this clay?
The present is hell, and the coming to-
morrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse
of to-day.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

From my eye flows no tear, from my lips
flow no curses,
I blast not the fiends who have hurl'd⁵
me from bliss;

For poor is the soul which bewailing re-
hearses
Its querulous grief, when in anguish
like this.

Was my eye, 'stead of tears, with red fury
flakes bright'ning,
Would my lips breathe a flame which
no stream could assuage,¹⁰
On our foes should my glance launch in
vengeance its lightning,
With transport my tongue give a loose
to its rage.

But now tears and curses, alike unavailing,
Would add to the souls of our tyrants
delight;

Could they view us our sad separation be-
wailing,¹⁵
Their merciless hearts would rejoice at
the sight.

Yet still, though we bend with a feign'd
resignation,
Life beams not for us with one ray that
can cheer;

Love and hope upon earth bring no more
consolation;
In the grave is our hope, for in life is
our fear.²⁰

Oh! when, my adored, in the tomb will
they place me,
Since, in life, love and friendship for
ever are fled?

If again in the mansion of death I
embrace thee,
Perhaps they will leave unmolested the
dead.

1805.

STANZAS TO A LADY, WITH THE POEMS OF CAMOËNS

This votive pledge of fond esteem,
Perhaps, dear girl! for me thou'lt prize;
It sings of Love's enchanting dream,
A theme we never can despise.

Who blames it but the envious fool,⁵
The old and disappointed maid;
Or pupil of the prudish school,
In single sorrow doom'd to fade?

Then read, dear girl! with feeling read,
For thou wilt ne'er be one of those;
To thee in vain I shall not plead¹¹
In pity for the poet's woes.

He was in sooth a genuine bard;
His was no faint, fictitious flame.
Like his, may love be thy reward,¹⁵
But not thy hapless fate the same.

THE FIRST KISS OF LOVE

'Α βάρβιτος δὲ χοροβαίς
Ἔρωτα μόνον ἤχει.—ANACREON.

AWAY with your fictions of flimsy
romance;
Those tissues of falsehood which folly
has wove!

Give me the mild beam of the soul-
breathing glance,
Or the rapture which dwells on the
first kiss of love.

Ye rhymers, whose bosoms with phantasy
glow,⁵
Whose pastoral passions are made for
the grove;

From what blest inspiration your sonnets
would flow,
Could you ever have tasted the first kiss
of love!

If Apollo should e'er his assistance re-
fuse,

Or the Nine be disposed from your
service to rove,¹⁰

Invoke them no more, bid adieu to the
muse,
And try the effect of the first kiss of
love.

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art!
Though prudes may condemn me, and
bigots reprove,

I court the effusions that spring from the
heart,¹⁵
Which throbs with delight to the first
kiss of love.

Your shepherds, your flocks, those fan-
tastical themes,

Perhaps may amuse, yet they never can
move:

Arcadia displays but a region of dreams:
What are visions like these to the first
kiss of love?²⁰

Oh! cease to affirm that man, since his
birth,

From Adam till now, has with wretched-
ness strove,

Some portion of paradise still is on earth,
And Eden revives in the first kiss of
love.

When age chills the blood, when our plea-
sures are past—²⁵

For years fleet away with the wings of
the dove—

The dearest remembrance will still be the
last,

Our sweetest memorial the first kiss of
love.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

ON A CHANGE OF MASTERS AT A GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOL

WHERE are those honours, Ida! once your
own,
When Probus fill'd your magisterial
throne?

As ancient Rome, fast falling to disgrace,
Hail'd a barbarian in her Caesar's place,
So you, degenerate, share as hard a fate,
And seat Pomposus where your Probus
sate. 6

Of narrow brain, yet of a narrower soul,
Pomposus holds you in his harsh control;
Pomposus, by no social virtue sway'd,
With florid jargon, and with vain parade;
With noisy nonsense, and new-fangled
rules,

Such as were ne'er before enforced in
schools.

Mistaking pedantry for learning's laws,
He governs, sanction'd but by self-applause;
With him the same dire fate attending
Rome, 15

Ill-fated Ida! soon must stamp your doom;
Like her o'erthrown, for ever lost to fame,
No trace of science left you, but the name.

July 1805.

TO THE DUKE OF DORSET

DORSET! whose early steps with mine
have stray'd,

Exploring every path of Ida's glade;
Whom still affection taught me to defend,
And made me less a tyrant than a friend,
Though the harsh custom of our youth-
ful band 5

Bade thee obey, and gave me to command;
Thee, on whose head a few short years
will shower

The gift of riches and the pride of power;
E'en now a name illustrious is thine own,
Renown'd in rank, nor far beneath the
throne. 10

Yet, Dorset, let not this seduce thy soul
To shun fair science, or evade control,
Though passive tutors, fearful to dispraise
The titled child, whose future breath may
raise, 14

View ducal errors with indulgent eyes,
And wink at faults they tremble to
chastise.

When youthful parasites, who bend the
knee

To wealth, their golden idol, not to thee,—
And even in simple boyhood's opening dawn
Some slaves are found to flatter and to
fawn.— 20

When these declare, 'that pomp alone
should wait

On one by birth predestined to be great;
That books were only meant for drudging
fools,

That gallant spirits scorn the common
rules;

Believe them not;—they point the path to
shame, 25

And seek to blast the honours of thy
name.

Turn to the few in Ida's early throng,
Whose souls disdain not to condemn the
wrong;

Or if, amidst the comrades of thy youth,
None dare to raise the sterner voice of
truth, 30

Ask thine own heart; 'twill bid thee, boy,
forbear;

For well I know that virtue lingers there.
Yes! I have mark'd thee many a passing
day,

But now new scenes invite me far away;
Yes! I have mark'd within that generous
mind 35

A soul, if well matured, to bless mankind.
Ah! though myself by nature haughty,
wild,

Whom Indiscretion hail'd her favourite
child;

Though every error stamps me for her
own,

And dooms my fall, I fain would fall
alone; 40

Though my proud heart no precept now
can tame,

I love the virtues which I cannot claim.
'Tis not enough, with other sons of
power,

To gleam the lambent meteor of an hour;
To swell some peerage page in feeble
pride, 45

With long-drawn names that grace no
page beside;

Then share with titled crowds the com-
mon lot—

In life just gazed at, in the grave forgot;
While nought divides thee from the vulgar
dead,

Except the dull cold stone that hides thy
head, 50

The mouldering 'scutcheon, or the
herald's roll,

That well-embazon'd but neglected scroll,
Where lords, unhonour'd, in the tomb
may find

One spot, to leave a worthless name
behind.

There sleep, unnoticed as the gloomy
vaults 55

That veil their dust, their follies, and their
faults,

A race, with old armorial lists o'erspread,
In records destined never to be read.

Fain would I view thee, with prophetic
eyes,

Exalted more among the good and wise,
A glorious and a long career pursue, 61

As first in rank, the first in talent too:

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Spurn every vice, each little meanness
shun;

Not Fortune's minion, but her noblest son.

Turn to the annals of a former day; 65
Bright are the deeds thine earlier sires display.

One, though a courtier, lived a man of worth,

And call'd, proud boast! the British drama forth.

Another view, not less renown'd for wit;
Alike for courts, and camps, or senates fit; 70

Bold in the field, and favour'd by the Nine;

In every splendid part ordain'd to shine;
Far, far distinguish'd from the glittering throng,

The pride of princes, and the boast of song.
Such were thy fathers; thus preserve their name; 75

Not heir to titles only, but to fame.

The hour draws nigh, a few brief days will close,

To me, this little scene of joys and woes;
Each knell of Time now warns me to resign

Shades where Hope, Peace, and Friendship all were mine: 80

Hope, that could vary like the rainbow's hue,

And gild their pinions as the moments flew;
Peace, that reflection never frown'd away,
By dreams of ill to cloud some future day;
Friendship, whose truth let childhood only tell; 85

Alas! they love not long, who love so well.
To these adieu! nor let me linger o'er

Scenes hail'd, as exiles hail their native shore,

Receding slowly through the dark-blue

Beheld by eyes that mourn, yet cannot weep. 90

Dorset, farewell! I will not ask one part
Of sad remembrance in so young a heart;

The coming morrow from thy youthful mind

Will sweep my name, nor leave a trace behind.

And yet, perhaps, in some maturer year,
Since chance has thrown us in the self-

same sphere, 96

Since the same senate, nay, the same debate,

May one day claim our suffrage for the state,

We hence may meet, and pass each other by,

With faint regard, or cold and distant eye. 100

For me, in future, neither friend nor foe,
A stranger to thyself, thy weal or woe,
With thee no more again I hope to trace

The recollection of our early race;
No more, as once, in social hours rejoice,
Or hear, unless in crowds, thy well-known voice: 106

Still, if the wishes of a heart untaught
To veil those feelings which perchance

it ought,
If these—but let me cease the lengthen'd

strain,—
Oh! if these wishes are not breathed in

vain, 110
The guardian seraph who directs thy fate

Will leave thee glorious, as he found thee great.

1805.

FRAGMENT

WRITTEN SHORTLY AFTER THE
MARRIAGE OF MISS CHAWORTH

HILLS of Annesley, bleak and barren,
Where my thoughtless childhood stray'd,

How the northern tempests, warring,
Howl above thy tufted shade!

Now no more, the hours beguiling, 5
Former favourite haunts I see;

Now no more my Mary smiling
Makes ye seem a heaven to me.

1805.

GRANTA

A MEDLEY

Ἀργυρέαις λόγχαισι μάχου καὶ πάντα κρατῆσαι.

Oh! could Le Sage's demon's gift
Be realized at my desire,

This night my trembling form he'd lift
To place it on St. Mary's spire.

Then would, unroof'd, old Granta's halls
Pedantic inmates full display: 6

Fellows who dream on lawn or stalls,
The price of venal votes to pay.

Then would I view each rival wight,
Petty and Palmerston survey; 10

Who canvass there with all their might,
Against the next elective day.

Lo! candidates and voters lie
All lull'd in sleep, a goodly number;

A race renown'd for piety, 15
Whose conscience won't disturb their slumber.

Lord H——, indeed, may not demur:
Fellows are sage, reflecting men:

They know preferment can occur
But very seldom,—now and then. 20

They know the Chancellor has got
Some pretty livings in disposal:

Each hopes that one may be his lot,
And therefore smiles on his proposal.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

- Now from the soporific scene 25
 I'll turn mine eye, as night grows later,
 To view, unheeded and unseen,
 The studious sons of Alma Mater.
- There, in apartments small and damp,
 The candidate for college prizes 30
 Sits poring by the midnight lamp;
 Goes late to bed, yet early rises.
- He surely well deserves to gain them,
 With all the honours of his college,
 Who, striving hardly to obtain them, 35
 Thus seeks unprofitable knowledge:
- Who sacrifices hours of rest
 To scan precisely metres Attic;
 Or agitates his anxious breast
 In solving problems mathematic: 40
- Who reads false quantities in Seale,
 Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle;
 Deprived of many a wholesome meal;
 In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle: 45
- Renouncing every pleasing page
 From authors of historic use; 45
 Preferring to the letter'd sage
 The square of the hypothenuse.
- Still, harmless are these occupations,
 That hurt none but the hapless student,
 Compared with other recreations, 51
 Which bring together the imprudent;
- Whose daring revels shock the sight,
 When vice and infamy combine,
 When drunkenness and dice invite, 55
 As every sense is steep'd in wine.
- Not so the methodistic crew,
 Who plans of reformation lay:
 In humble attitude they sue,
 And for the sins of others pray: 60
- Forgetting that their pride of spirit,
 Their exultation in their trial,
 Detracts most largely from the merit
 Of all their boasted self-denial. 64
- 'Tis morn:—from these I turn my sight.
 What scene is this which meets the eye?
 A numerous crowd, array'd in white,
 Across the green in numbers fly.
- Loud rings in air the chapel bell;
 'Tis hush'd:—what sounds are these I 70
 hear?
- The organ's soft celestial swell
 Rolls deeply on the list'ning ear.
- To this is join'd the sacred song,
 The royal minstrel's hallow'd strain;
 Though he who hears the music long 75
 Will never wish to hear again.
- Our choir would scarcely be excused,
 Even as a band of raw beginners;
 All mercy now must be refused
 To such a set of croaking sinners. 80
- If David, when his toils were ended,
 Had heard these blockheads sing
 before him,
 To us his psalms had ne'er descended,—
 In furious mood he would have tore 'em.
- The luckless Israelites, when taken 85
 By some inhuman tyrant's order,
 Were ask'd to sing, by joy forsaken,
 On Babylonian river's border.
- Oh! had they sung in notes like these,
 Inspired by stratagem or fear, 90
 They might have set their hearts at ease,
 The devil a soul had stay'd to hear.
- But if I scribble longer now,
 The deuce a soul will stay to read;
 My pen is blunt, my ink is low; 95
 'Tis almost time to stop, indeed.
- Therefore, farewell, old Granta's spires!
 No more, like Cleofas, I fly;
 No more thy theme my muse inspires;
 The reader's tired, and so am I. 100
 1806.

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF HARROW ON THE HILL

Oh! mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos.—
 VIRGIL.

- YE scenes of my childhood, whose loved
 recollection
 Embitters the present, compared with
 the past;
 Where science first dawn'd on the powers
 of reflection,
 And friendships were form'd, too
 romantic to last;
- Where fancy yet joys to trace the resem-
 blance 5
 Of comrades, in friendship and mischief
 allied;
 How welcome to me your ne'er fading re-
 membrance,
 Which rests in the bosom, though
 hope is denied!
- Again I revisit the hills where we sported,
 The streams where we swam, and the
 fields where we fought; 10
 The school where, loud warn'd by the
 bell, we resorted,
 To pore o'er the precepts by pedagogues
 taught.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Again I behold where for hours I have
ponder'd,
As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone
I lay;

Or round the steep brow of the church-
yard I wander'd,
To catch the last gleam of the sun's
setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spec-
tators surrounded,
Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo
o'erthrown;

While, to swell my young pride, such ap-
plauses resounded,
I fancied that Mossop himself was out-
shone:

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep impre-
cation,

By my daughters of kingdom and
reason deprived;
Till, fired by loud plaudits and self-adula-
tion,

I regarded myself as a Garrick revived.

Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I
regret you!

Unfaded your memory dwells in my
breast;

Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can
forget you:

Your pleasures may still be in fancy
possest.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore
me,

While fate shall the shades of the future
unroll!

Since darkness o'er shadows the prospect
before me,

More dear is the beam of the past to my
soul!

But if, through the course of the years
which await me,

Some new scene of pleasure should
open to view,

I will say, while with rapture the thought
shall elate me,

'Oh! such were the days which my
infancy knew.'

1806.

TO M—

Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire,
With bright but mild affection shine,
Though they might kindle less desire,
Love, more than mortal, would be thine.

For thou art form'd so heavenly fair,
Howe'er those orbs may wildly beam,
We must admire, but still despair;
That fatal glance forbids esteem.

When Nature stamp'd thy beauteous birth,
So much perfection in thee shone,
She fear'd that, too divine for earth,
The skies might claim thee for their own:

Therefore, to guard her dearest work,
Lest angels might dispute the prize,
She bade a secret lightning lurk
Within those once celestial eyes.

These might the boldest sylph appal,
When gleaming with meridian blaze;
Thy beauty must enrapture all;
But who can dare thine ardent gaze?

'Tis said that Berenice's hair
In stars adorns the vault of heaven;
But they would ne'er permit thee there,
Thou wouldst so far outshine the seven.

For did those eyes as planets roll,
Thy sister-lights would scarce appear:
E'en suns, which systems now control,
Would twinkle dimly through their
sphere.

1806.

TO WOMAN

WOMAN! experience might have told me
That all must love thee who behold thee:
Surely experience might have taught
Thy firmest promises are nought;
But, placed in all thy charms before me,
All I forget, but to adore thee.
Oh memory! thou choicest blessing
When join'd with hope, when still possess-
ing;

But how much cursed by every lover
When hope is fled and passion's over.
Woman, that fair and fond deceiver,
How prompt are striplings to believe her!
How throbs the pulse when first we view
The eye that rolls in glossy blue,
Or sparkles black, or mildly throws
A beam from under hazel brows!
How quick we credit every oath,
And hear her plight the willing troth!
Fondly we hope 'twill last for aye,
When, lo! she changes in a day.
This record will for ever stand,
'Woman, thy vows are traced in sand.'

TO M. S. G.

WHEN I dream that you love me, you'll
surely forgive;
Extend not your anger to sleep;
For in visions alone your affection can
live,—
I rise, and it leaves me to weep.

Then, Morpheus! envelope my faculties
fast,
Shed o'er me your languor benign;
Should the dream of to-night but re-
semble the last,
What rapture celestial is mine!

HOURS OF IDLENESS

They tell us that slumber, the sister of
death,
Mortality's emblem is given; 10
To fate how I long to resign my frail breath
If this be a foretaste of heaven!

Ah! frown not, sweet lady, unbend your
soft brow,
Nor deem me too happy in this; 14
If I sin in my dream, I atone for it now,
Thus doom'd but to gaze upon bliss.
Though in visions, sweet lady, perhaps
you may smile,
Oh! think not my penance deficient!
When dreams of your presence my
slumbers beguile,
To awake will be torture sufficient. 20

TO MARY

ON RECEIVING HER PICTURE

THIS faint resemblance of thy charms,
Though strong as mortal art could give,
My constant heart of fear disarms,
Revives my hopes, and bids me live.

Here I can trace the locks of gold 5
Which round thy snowy forehead wave,
The cheeks which sprung from beauty's
mould,
The lips which made me beauty's slave.

Here I can trace—ah, no! that eye,
Whose azure floats in liquid fire, 10
Must all the painter's art defy,
And bid him from the task retire.

Here I behold its beauteous hue;
But where's the beam so sweetly stray-
ing,
Which gave a lustre to its blue, 15
Like Luna o'er the ocean playing?

Sweet copy! far more dear to me,
Lifeless, unfeeling as thou art,
Than all the living forms could be,
Save her who placed thee next my heart.

She placed it, sad, with needless fear, 21
Lest time might shake my wavering
soul,

Unconscious that her image there
Held every sense in fast control.

Through hours, through years, through
time, 'twill cheer; 25
My hope, in gloomy moments, raise;
In life's last conflict 'twill appear,
And meet my fond expiring gaze.

TO LESBIA

LESBIA! since far from you I've ranged,
Our souls with fond affection glow not;
You say 'tis I, not you, have changed.
'd tell you why,—but yet I know not.

Your polish'd brow no cares have crost;
And, Lesbial! we are not much older
Since, trembling, first my heart I lost,
Or-told my love, with hope grown
bolder.

Sixteen was then our utmost age,
Two years have lingering pass'd away, 10
love!
And now new thoughts our minds engage,
At least I feel disposed to stray, love!

'Tis I that am alone to blame,
I, that am guilty of love's treason;
Since your sweet breast is still the same, 15
Caprice must be my only reason.

I do not, love! suspect your truth,
With jealous doubt my bosom heaves
not;
Warm was the passion of my youth,
One trace of dark deceit it leaves not.

No, no, my flame was not pretended; 21
For, oh! I loved you most sincerely;
And—though our dream at last is
ended—
My bosom still esteems you dearly.

No more we meet in yonder bowers; 25
Absence has made me prone to roving;
But older, firmer hearts than ours,
Have found monotony in loving.

Your cheek's soft bloom is unimpair'd,
New beauties still are daily bright'ning,
Your eye for conquest beams prepared,
The forge of love's resistless lightning.

Arm'd thus, to make their bosoms bleed,
Many will throng to sigh like me, love!
More constant they may prove, indeed;
Fonder, alas! they ne'er can be, love!

LINES ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

[As the author was discharging his pistols in
a garden, two ladies passing near the spot were
alarmed by the sound of a bullet hissing near
them; to one of whom the following stanzas were
addressed the next morning.]

DOUBTLESS, sweet girl! the hissing lead,
Wafting destruction o'er thy charms,
And hurtling o'er thy lovely head,
Has fill'd that breast with fond alarms.

Surely some envious demon's force, 5
Vex'd to behold such beauty here,
Impell'd the bullet's viewless course,
Diverted from its first career.

Yes! in that nearly fatal hour 9
The ball obey'd some hell-born guide;
But Heaven, with interposing power,
In pity turn'd the death aside.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Yet, as perchance one trembling tear
Upon that thrilling bosom fell;
Which I, th' unconscious cause of fear, 15
Extracted from its glistening cell:

Say, what dire penance can atone
For such an outrage done to thee?
Arraign I'd before thy beauty's throne,
What punishment wilt thou decree?

Might I perform the judge's part, 21
The sentence I should scarce deplore;
It only would restore a heart
Which but belong'd to thee before.

The least atonement I can make 25
Is to become no longer free;
Henceforth I breathe but for thy sake,
Thou shalt be all in all to me.

But thou, perhaps, may'st now reject
Such expiation of my guilt; 30
Come then, some other mode elect;
Let it be death, or what thou wilt.

Choose then, relentless! and I swear
Nought shall thy dread decree pre-
vent;

Yet hold—one little word forbear! 35
Let it be aught but banishment.

LOVE'S LAST ADIEU

**Acti d' dei me pheteyu — ANACREON.*

THE roses of love glad the garden of life,
Though nurtured 'mid weeds dropping
pestilent dew,
Till time crops the leaves with unmerciful
knife,
Or prunes them for ever, in love's last
adieu!

In vain with endearments we soothe the
sad heart, 5
In vain do we vow for an age to be true;
The chance of an hour may command us
to part,
Or death disunite us in love's last adieu!

Still Hope, breathing peace through the
grief-swollen breast,
Will whisper, 'Our meeting we yet may
renew:' 10
With this 'dream of deceit half our
sorrow's repress,
Nor tastewe the poison of love's last adieu!

Oh! mark you yon pair: in the sunshine
of youth
Love twined round their childhood his
flowers as they grew; 14
They flourish awhile in the season of truth,
Till chill'd by the winter of love's last
adieu!

Sweet lady! why thus doth a tear steal its
way

Down a cheek which outrivals thy
bosom in hue?

Yet why do I ask?—to distraction a prey,
Thy reason has perish'd with love's last
adieu! 20

Oh! who is yon misanthrope, shunning
mankind?

From cities to caves of the forest he flew:
There, raving, he howls his complaint to
the wind;

The mountains reverberate love's last
adieu!

Now hate rules a heart which in love's
easy chains 25

Once passion's tumultuous blandish-
ments knew;

Despair now inflames the dark tide of his
veins; 30

He ponders in frenzy on love's last
adieu!

How he envies the wretch with a soul
wrapt in steel!

His pleasures are scarce, yet his
troubles are few, 30

Who laughs at the pang which he never
can feel,

And dreads not the anguish of love's
last adieu!

Youth flies, life decays, even hope is
o'ercast;

No more with love's former devotion
we sue:

He spreads his young wing, he retires
with the blast; 35

The shroud of affection is love's last
adieu!

In this life of probation for rap'ture divine,
Astrea declares that some penance is
due;

From him who has worshipp'd at love's
gentle shrine,

The atonement is ample in love's last
adieu! 40

Who kneels to the god, on his altar of
light

Must myrtle and cypress alternately
strew:

His myrtle, an emblem of purest delight;
His cypress, the garland of love's last
adieu!

DAMÆTAS

In law an infant, and in years a boy,
In mind a slave to every vicious joy;

From every sense of shame and virtue
wean'd;

In lies an adept, in deceit a fiend;

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Versed in hypocrisy, while yet a child;
 Fickle as wind, of inclinations wild;
 Woman his dupe, his heedless friend a
 tool;
 Old in the world, though scarcely broke
 from school;
 Dametas ran through all the maze of sin,
 And found the goal when others just
 begin:
 Even still conflicting passions shake his
 soul,
 And bid him drain the dregs of pleasure's
 bowl;
 But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former
 chain,
 And what was once his bliss appears his
 bane.

TO MARION

MARION! why that pensive brow?
 What disgust to life hast thou?
 Change that discontented air;
 Frowns become not one so fair.
 'Tis not love disturbs thy rest;
 Love's a stranger to thy breast;
 He in dimpling smiles appears,
 Or mourns in sweetly timid tears,
 Or bends the languid eyelid down,
 But shuns the cold forbidding frown. 10
 Then resume thy former fire,
 Some will love, and all admire;
 While that icy aspect chills us,
 Nought but cool indifference thrills us.
 Wouldst thou wandering hearts beguile,
 Smile at least, or seem to smile. 16
 Eyes like thine were never meant
 To hide their orbs in dark restraint.
 Spite of all thou fain wouldst say,
 Still in truant beams they play. 20
 Thy lips—but here my modest Muse
 Her impulse chaste must needs refuse:
 She blushes, curt'sies, frowns,—in short
 she
 Dreads lest the subject should transport
 me;
 And flying off in search of reason, 25
 Brings prudence back in proper season.
 All I shall therefore say (whate'er
 I think, is neither here nor there)
 Is, that such lips, of looks endearing,
 Were form'd for better things than sneer-
 ing: 30
 Of soothing compliments divested,
 Advice at least's disinterested;
 Such is my artless song to thee,
 From all the flow of flattery free;
 Counsel like mine is like a brother's, 35
 My heart is given to some others;
 That is to say, unskill'd to cozen,
 It shares itself among a dozen.

Marion, adieu! oh, pr'ythee slight not
 his warning, though it may delight not;

And, lest my precepts be displeasing 41
 To those who think remonstrance teasing:
 At once I'll tell thee our opinion
 Concerning woman's soft dominion:
 Howe'er we gaze with admiration 45
 On eyes of blue or lips carnation,
 Howe'er the flowing locks attract us,
 Howe'er those beauties may distract us,
 Still fickle, we are prone to rove,
 These cannot fix our souls to love; 50
 It is not too severe a stricture
 To say they form a pretty picture;
 But wouldst thou see the secret chain
 Which binds us in your humble train,
 To hail you queens of all creation, 55
 Know, in a word, 'tis ANIMATION.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR A LOCK
 OF HAIR BRAIDED WITH HIS OWN, AND
 APPOINTED A NIGHT IN DECEMBER TO
 MEET HIM IN THE GARDEN

THESE locks, which fondly thus entwine,
 In firmer chains our hearts confine,
 Than all th' unmeaning protestations,
 Which swell with nonsense love orations.
 Our love is fix'd, I think we've proved it;
 Nor time, nor place, nor art have moved it;
 Then wherefore should we sigh and whine,
 With groundless jealousy repine,
 With silly whims and fancies frantic,
 Merely to make our love romantic? 10
 Why should you weep like Lydia Lan-
 guish,
 And fret with self-created anguish?
 Or doom the lover you have chosen,
 On winter nights to sigh half frozen;
 In leafless shades to sue for pardon, 15
 Only because the scene's a garden?
 For gardens seem, by one consent,
 Since Shakspeare set the precedent,
 Since Juliet first declared her passion,
 To form the place of assignation. 20
 Oh! would some modern muse inspire,
 And seat her by a sea-coal fire;
 Or had the bard at Christmas written,
 And laid the scene of love in Britain,
 He surely, in commiseration, 25
 Had changed the place of declaration.
 In Italy I've no objection;
 Warm nights are proper for reflection;
 But here our climate is so rigid,
 That love itself is rather frigid: 30
 Think on our chilly situation,
 And curb this rage for imitation;
 Then let us meet, as oft we've done,
 Beneath the influence of the sun;
 Or, if at midnight I must meet you, 35
 Within your mansion let me greet you:
 There we can love for hours together,
 Much better, in such snowy weather,
 Than placed in all th' Arcadian groves
 That ever witness'd rural loves; 40

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Then, if my passion fail to please,
Next night I'll be content to freeze;
No more I'll give a loose to laughter
But curse my fate for ever after.

OSCAR OF ALVA

A TALE

How sweetly shines through azure skies,
The lamp of heaven on Lora's shore;
Where Alva's hoary turrets rise,
And hear the din of arms no more!

But often has yon rolling moon 5
On Alva's casques of silver play'd;
And view'd, at midnight's silent noon,
Her chiefs in gleaming mail array'd:

And on the crimson'd rocks beneath,
Which scowl o'er ocean's sullen flow,
Pale in the scatter'd ranks of death, 11
She saw the gasping warrior low;

While many an eye which ne'er again
Could mark the rising orb of day,
Turn'd feebly from the gory plain, 15
Beheld in death her fading ray.

Once to those eyes the lamp of Love,
They blest her dear propitious light;
But now she glimmer'd from above,
A sad, funereal torch of night. 20

Faded is Alva's noble race,
And gray her towers are seen afar;
No more her heroes urge the chase,
Or roll the crimson tide of war.

But who was last of Alva's clan? 25
Why grows the moss on Alva's stone?
Her towers resound no steps of man,
They echo to the gale alone.

And when that gale is fierce and high,
A sound is heard in yonder hall; 30
It rises hoarsely through the sky,
And vibrates o'er the mould'ring wall.

Yes, when the eddying tempest sighs,
It shakes the shield of Oscar brave;
But there no more his banners rise, 35
No more his plumes of sable wave.

Fair shone the sun on Oscar's birth,
When Angus hail'd his eldest born;
The vassals round their chieftain's hearth
Crowd to applaud the happy morn. 40

They feast upon the mountain deer,
The pibroch raised his piercing note;
To gladden more their highland cheer,
The strains in martial numbers float:

And they who heard the war-notes wild
Hoped that one day the pibroch's strain
Should play before the hero's child
While he should lead the tartan train.

Another year is quickly past,
And Angus hails another son; 50
His natal day is like the last,
Nor soon the jocund feast was done.

Taught by their sire to bend the bow,
On Alva's dusky hills of wind, 54
The boys in childhood chased the roe,
And left their hounds in speed behind.

But ere their years of youth are o'er,
They mingle in the ranks of war;
They lightly wheel the bright claymore,
And send the whistling arrow far. 60

Dark was the flow of Oscar's hair,
Wildly it stream'd along the gale;
But Allan's locks were bright and fair,
And pensive seem'd his cheek, and pale.

But Oscar own'd a hero's soul, 65
His dark eye shone through beams of
truth;

Allan had early learn'd control,
And smooth his words had been from
youth.

Both, both were brave; the Saxon spear
Was shiver'd oft beneath their steel; 70
And Oscar's bosom scorn'd to fear,
But Oscar's bosom knew to feel;

While Allan's soul belied his form,
Unworthy with such charms to dwell:
Keen as the lightning of the storm, 75
On foes his deadly vengeance fell.

From high Southannon's distant tower
Arrived a young and noble dame;
With Kenneth's lands to form her dower,
Glenalvon's blue-eyed daughter came;

And Oscar claim'd the beauteous bride,
And Angus on his Oscar smiled: 82
It soothed the father's feudal pride
Thus to obtain Glenalvon's child.

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note! 85
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

See how the heroes' blood-red plumes
Assembled wave in Alva's hall; 90
Each youth his varied plaid assumes,
Attending on their chieftain's call.

It is not war their aid demands,
The pibroch plays the song of peace;
To Oscar's nuptials throng the bands, 95
Nor yet the sounds of pleasure cease.

But where is Oscar? sure 'tis late:
Is this a bridegroom's ardent flame?
While thronging guests and ladies wait,
Nor Oscar nor his brother came. 100

HOURS OF IDLENESS

At length young Allan join'd the bride;
 'Why comes not Oscar?' Angus said:
 'Is he not here?' the youth replied;
 'With me he roved not o'er the glade:

'Perchance, forgetful of the day, 105
 'Tis his to chase the bounding roe;
 Or ocean's waves prolong his stay;
 Yet Oscar's bark is seldom slow.'

'Oh, no!' the anguish'd sire rejoin'd,
 'Nor chase, nor wave, my boy delay;
 Would he to Mora seem unkind? 111
 Would aught to her impede his way?

'Oh, search, ye chiefs! oh, search around!
 Allan, with these through Alva fly;
 Till Oscar, till my son is found, 115
 Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply.'

All is confusion—through the vale
 The name of Oscar hoarsely rings,
 It rises on the murmuring gale,
 Till night expands her dusky wings;

It breaks the stillness of the night, 121
 But echoes through her shades in vain;
 It sounds through morning's misty light,
 But Oscar comes not o'er the plain.

Three days, three sleepless nights, the
 Chief 125
 For Oscar search'd each mountain cave:
 Then hope is lost; in boundless grief,
 His locks in gray-torn ringlets wave.

'Oscar! my son!—thou God of heaven,
 Restore the prop of sinking age! 130
 Or if that hope no more is given,
 Yield his assassin to my rage.

'Yes, on some desert rocky shore
 My Oscar's whiten'd bones must lie;
 Then grant, thou God! I ask no more,
 With him his frantic sire may die! 136

'Yet he may live,—away, despair!
 Be calm, my soul! he yet may live;
 T' arraign my fate, my voice forbear!
 O God! my impious prayer forgive.

'What, if he live for me no more, 141
 I sink forgotten in the dust,
 The hope of Alva's age is o'er:
 Alas! can pangs like these be just?'

Thus did the hapless parent mourn, 145
 Till Time, which soothes severest woe,
 Had bade serenity return
 And made the tear-drop cease to flow.

For still some latent hope survived 149
 That Oscar might once more appear;
 His hope now droop'd and now revived,
 Till Time had told a tedious year.

Days roll'd along, the orb of light
 Again had run his destined race;
 No Oscar bless'd his father's sight, 155
 And sorrow left a fainter trace.

For youthful Allan still remain'd,
 And now his father's only joy:
 And Mora's heart was quickly gain'd,
 For beauty crown'd the fair-hair'd boy.

She thought that Oscar low was laid,
 And Allan's face was wondrous fair;
 If Oscar lived, some other maid
 Had claim'd his faithless bosom's care.

And Angus said, if one year more 165
 In fruitless hope was pass'd away,
 His fondest scruples should be o'er,
 And he would name their nuptial day.

Slow roll'd the moons, but blest at last
 Arrived the dearly destined morn: 170
 The year of anxious trembling past,
 What smiles the lovers' cheeks adorn!

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
 Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
 In joyous strains the voices float, 175
 And still the choral peal prolong.

Again the clan, in festive crowd,
 Throng through the gate of Alva's hall;
 The sounds of mirth re-echo loud,
 And all their former joy recall. 180

But who is he, whose darken'd brow
 Grooms in the midst of general mirth?
 Before his eyes' far fiercer glow
 The blue flames curdle o'er the hearth.

Dark is the robe which wraps his form,
 And tall his plume of gory red; 186
 His voice is like the rising storm,
 But light and trackless is his tread.

'Tis noon of night, the pledge goes round,
 The bridegroom's health is deeply
 quaff'd; 190
 With shouts the vaulted roofs resound,
 And all combine to hail the draught.

Sudden the stranger-chief arose,
 And all the clamorous crowd are
 hush'd; 194
 And Angus' cheek with wonder glows,
 And Mora's tender bosom blush'd.

'Old man!' he cried, 'this pledge is done;
 Thou saw'st 'twas duly drank by me;
 It hail'd the nuptials of thy son:
 Now will I claim a pledge from thee.

'While all around is mirth and joy, 201
 To bless thy Allan's happy lot,
 Say, hadst thou ne'er another boy?
 Say, why should Oscar be forgot?'

HOURS OF IDLENESS

- 'Alas!' the hapless sire replied, 205
The big tear starting as he spoke,
'When Oscar left my hall, or died,
This aged heart was almost broke.
- 'Thrice has the earth revolved her course
Since Oscar's form has bless'd my
sight; 210
And Allan is my last resource,
Since martial Oscar's death or flight.'
- 'Tis well,' replied the stranger stern,
And fiercely flash'd his rolling eye;
'Thy Oscar's fate I fain would learn; 215
Perhaps the hero did not die.
- 'Perchance, if those whom most he
loved
Would call, thy Oscar might return;
Perchance the chief has only roved;
For him thy beltane yet may burn. 220
- 'Fill high the bowl the table round,
We will not claim the pledge by stealth;
With wine let every cup be crown'd;
Pledge me departed Oscar's health.'
- 'With all my soul,' old Angus said, 225
And fill'd his goblet to the brim:
'Here's to my boy! alive or dead,
I ne'er shall find a son like him.
- 'Bravely, old man, this health has sped;
But why does Allan trembling stand?
Come, drink remembrance of the dead,
And raise thy cup with firmer hand.'
- The crimson glow of Allan's face
Was turn'd at once to ghastly hue;
The drops of death each other chase 235
Adown in agonizing dew.
- Thrice did he raise the goblet high,
And thrice his lips refused to taste;
For thrice he caught the stranger's eye
On his with deadly fury placed. 240
- 'And is it thus a brother hails
A brother's fond remembrance here?
If thus affection's strength prevails,
What might we not expect from fear?'
- Roused by the sneer, he raised the bowl,
'Would Oscar now could share our
mirth!' 246
Internal fear appall'd his soul;
He said, and dash'd the cup to earth.
- 'Tis he! I hear my murderer's voice!
Loud shrieks a darkly gleaming form.
'A murderer's voice!' the roof replies,
And deeply swells the bursting storm.
- The tapers wink, the chieftains shrink,
The stranger's gone,—amidst the crew,
A form was seen in tartan green, 255
And tall the shade terrific grew.
- His waist was bound with a broad belt
round,
His plume of sable stream'd on high;
But his breast was bare, with the red
wounds there, 259
And fix'd was the glare of his glassy eye.
- And thrice he smiled, with his eye so wild,
On Angus bending low the knee;
And thrice he frown'd on a chief on the
ground, 263
Whom shivering crowds with horror see.
- The bolts loud roll from pole to pole,
The thunders through the welkin ring,
And the gleaming form, through the mist
of the storm,
Was borne on high by the whirlwind's
wing.
- Cold was the feast, the revel ceased.
Who lies upon the stony floor? 270
Oblivion press'd old Angus' breast,
At length his life-pulse throbs once
more.
- 'Away, away! let the leech essay
To pour the light on Allan's eyes:'
His sand is done,—his race is run,— 275
Oh! never more shall Allan rise!
- But Oscar's breast is cold as clay,
His locks are lifted by the gale;
And Allan's barbed arrow lay 279
With him in dark Glentanar's vale.
- And whence the dreadful stranger came,
Or who, no mortal might can tell; 282
But no one doubts the form of flame,
For Alva's sons knew Oscar well.
- Ambition nerved young Allan's hand,
Exulting demons wing'd his dart;
While Envy waved her burning brand,
And pour'd her venom round his heart.
- Swift is the shaft from Allan's bow;
Whose streaming life-blood stains his
side? 290
Dark Oscar's sable crest is low,
The dart has drunk his vital tide.
- And Mora's eye could Allan move,
She bade his wounded pride rebel:
Alas! that eyes which beam'd with love
Should urge the soul to deeds of hell.
- Lo! seest thou not a lonely tomb? 297
Which rises o'er a warrior dead?
It glimmers through the twilight gloom;
Oh! that is Allan's nuptial bed. 300
- Far, distant far, the noble grave
Which held his clan's great ashes stood;
And o'er his corse no banners wave,
For they were stain'd with kindred blood.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

What minstrel gray, what hoary bard,
Shall Allan's deeds on harp-strings
raise?
The song is glory's chief reward,
But who can strike a murderer's praise?

Unstrung, untouch'd, the harp must
stand,
No minstrel dare the theme awake;
Guilt would benumb his palsied hand,
His harp in shuddering chords would
break.

No lyre of fame, no hallow'd verse,
Shall sound his glories high in air:
A dying father's bitter curse, 315
A brother's death-groan echoes there.

THE EPISODE OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

PARAPHRASE FROM THE ÆNEID, LIB. IX

NISUS, the guardian of the portal, stood,
Eager to gild his arms with hostile blood;
Well skill'd in fight the quivering lance
to wield,

Or pour his arrows through th' embattled
field:

From Ida torn, he left his sylvan cave, 5
And sought a foreign home, a distant
grave.

To watch the movements of the Daunian
host,
With him Euryalus sustains the post;
No lovelier mien adorn'd the ranks of
Troy,

And beardless bloom yet graced the gal-
lant boy; 10
Though few the seasons of his youthful
life,

As yet a novice in the martial strife,
'Twas his, with beauty, valour's gifts to
share—

A soul heroic, as his form was fair:
These burn with one pure flame of gene-
rous love; 15

In peace, in war, united still they move;
Friendship and glory form their joint
reward;

And now combined they hold their
nightly guard.

'What god,' exclaim'd the first,
'instils this fire?

Or, in itself a god, what great desire? 20
My labouring soul, with anxious thought
oppress'd,

Abhors this station of inglorious rest;
The love of fame with this can ill accord,
Be't mine to seek for glory with my sword.
Seest thou yon camp, with torches twink-
ling dim, 25

Where drunken slumbers wrap each lazy
limb?

Where confidence and ease the watch dis-
dain,
And drowsy Silence holds her sable reign?
Then hear my thought:—In deep and
sullen grief

Our troops and leaders mourn their
absent chief: 30

Now could the gifts and promised prize
be thine

(The deed, the danger, and the fame be
mine),

Were this decreed, beneath yon rising
mound,

Methinks, an easy path perchance were
found;

Which past, I speed my way to Pallas'
walls, 35

And lead Æneas from Evander's halls.'

With equal ardour fired, and warlike joy,
His glowing friend address'd the Dardan
boy:—

'These deeds, my Nisus, shalt thou dare
alone?

Must all the fame, the peril, be thine
own? 40

Am I by thee despised, and left afar,
As one unfit to share the toils of war?

Not thus his son the great Opheltes
taught;

Not thus my sire in Argive combats
fought;

Not thus, when Iliion fell by heavenly hate,
I track'd Æneas through the walks of
fate: 46

Thou know'st my deeds, my breast devoid
of fear,

And hostile life-drops dim my gory spear.
Here is a soul with hope immortal burns,

And life, ignoble life, for *glory* spurns.
Fame, fame is cheaply earn'd by fleeting
breath: 51

The price of honour is the sleep of
death.'

Then Nisus:—'Calm thy bosom's
fond alarms:

Thy heart beats fiercely to the din of arms.
More dear thy worth and valour than my
own, 55

I swear by him who fills Olympus' throne!
So may I triumph, as I speak the truth,

And clasp again the comrade of my youth!
But should I fall,—and he who dares
advance 60

Through hostile legions must abide by
chance,—

If some Rutulian arm, with adverse blow,
Should lay the friend, who ever loved thee,
low,

Live thou, such beauties I would fain pre-
serve,

Thy budding years a lengthen'd term
deserve.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

When humbled in the dust, let some one
 be, ⁶⁵
 Whose gentle eyes will shed one tear for
 me;
 Whose manly arm may snatch me back
 by force,
 Or wealth redeem from foes my captive corse;
 Or, if my destiny these last deny,
 If in the spoiler's power my ashes lie, ⁷⁰
 Thy pious care may raise a simple tomb,
 To mark thy love, and signalize my doom.
 Why should thy doting wretched mother
 weep
 Her only boy, reclined in endless sleep?
 Who, for thy sake, the tempest's fury
 dared, ⁷⁵
 Who, for thy sake, war's deadly peril shared;
 Who braved what woman never braved
 before,
 And left her native for the Latian shore.'

'In vain you damp the ardour of my
 soul,'
 Replied Euryalus; 'it scorns controul! ⁸⁰
 Hence, let us haste!'—their brother
 guards arose,
 Roused by their call, nor court again
 repose;
 The pair, buoy'd up on Hope's exulting
 wing,
 Their stations leave, and speed to seek the
 king.

Now o'er the earth a solemn stillness ran,
 And lull'd alike the cares of brute and
 man; ⁸⁶
 Save where the Dardan leaders nightly
 hold
 Alternate converse, and their plans un-
 fold.
 On one great point the council are agreed,
 An instant message to their prince de-
 creed; ⁹⁰
 Each lean'd upon the lance he well could
 wield,
 And poised with easy arm his ancient
 shield;
 When Nisus and his friend their leave
 request
 To offer something to their high behest.
 With anxious tremors, yet unawed by
 fear, ⁹⁵
 The faithful pair before the throne appear:
 Iulus greets them; at his kind command,
 The elder first address'd the hoary band.

'With patience' (thus Hyrtacides began)
 'Attend, nor judge from youth our humble
 plan. ¹⁰⁰
 Where yonder beacons half expiring beam,
 Our slumbering foes of future conquest
 dream,
 Nor heed that we a secret path have
 traced,
 Between the ocean and the portal placed.

Beneath the covert of the blackening
 smoke, ¹⁰⁵
 Whose shade securely our design will
 cloak!
 If you, ye chiefs, and fortune will allow,
 We'll bend our course to yonder moun-
 tain's brow,
 Where Pallas' walls at distance meet the
 sight,
 Seen o'er the glade, when not obscured by
 night: ¹¹⁰
 Then shall Æneas in his pride return,
 When hostile matrons raise their off-
 spring's urn;
 And Latian spoils and purpled heaps of
 dead
 Shall mark the havoc of our hero's tread.
 Such is our purpose, not unknown the
 way; ¹¹⁵
 Where yonder torrent's devious waters
 stray,
 Oft have we seen, when hunting by the
 stream,
 The distant spires above the valleys
 gleam.'

Mature in years, for sober wisdom
 famed,
 Moved by the speech, Alethes here ex-
 claim'd, ¹²⁰
 'Ye parent gods! who rule the fate of
 Troy,
 Still dwells the Dardan spirit in the boy;
 When minds like these in striplings thus ye
 raise,
 Yours is the godlike act, be yours the
 praise;
 In gallant youth, my fainting hopes
 revive, ¹²⁵
 And Ilion's wonted glories still survive.'
 Then in his warm embrace the boys he
 press'd,
 And, quivering, strain'd them to his aged
 breast;
 With tears the burning cheek of each be-
 dew'd,
 And, sobbing, thus his first discourse re-
 new'd: ¹³⁰
 'What gift, my countrymen, what martial
 prize,
 Can we bestow, which you may not de-
 spise?
 Our deities the first best boon have
 given—
 Internal virtues are the gift of Heaven.
 What poor rewards can bless your deeds
 on earth, ¹³⁵
 Doubtless await such young, exalted
 worth.
 Æneas and Ascanius shall combine
 To yield applause far, far surpassing mine.'

Iulus then:—'By all the powers above!
 By those Penates who my country love!

HOURS OF IDLENESS

By hoary Vesta's sacred fane, I swear, 141
My hopes are all in you, ye generous pair!
Restore my father to my grateful sight,
And all my sorrows yield to one delight.
Nisus! two silver goblets are thine own,
Saved from Arisba's stately domes o'er-
thrown! 146

My sire secured them on that fatal day,
Nor left such bowls an Argive robber's
prey:

Two massy tripods, also, shall be thine;
Two talents polish'd from the glittering
mine; 150

An ancient cup, which Tyrian Dido gave,
While yet our vessels press'd the Punic
wave:

But when the hostile chiefs at length bow
down,

When great Æneas wears Hesperia's
crown,

The casque, the buckler, and the fiery steed
Which Turnus guides with more than
mortal speed, 156

Are thine; no envious lot shall then be
cast,

I pledge my word, irrevocably past:
Nay more, twelve slaves, and twice six
captive dames,

To soothe thy softer hours with amorous
flames, 160

And all the realms which now the Latins
sway,

The labours of to-night shall well repay.
But thou, my generous youth, whose
tender years

Are near my own, whose worth my heart
reveres,

Henceforth affection, sweetly thus begun,
Shall join our bosoms and our souls in
one; 166

Without thy aid, no glory shall be mine;
Without thy dear advice, no great design;

Alike through life esteem'd, thou godlike
boy,

In war my bulwark, and in peace my joy.'

To him Euryalus:—'No day shall
shame 171

The rising glories which from this I claim.
Fortune may favour, or the skies may
frown,

But valour, spite of fate, obtains renown.
Yet, ere from hence our eager steps de-
part, 175

One boon I beg, the nearest to my heart:
My mother, sprung from Priam's royal
line,

Like thine ennobled, hardly less divine,
Nor Troy nor king Acestes' realms re-
strain 179

Her feeble age from dangers of the main:
Alone she came, all selfish fears above,
A bright example of maternal love.

Unknown the secret enterprise I brave,

Lest grief should bend my parent to the
grave;

From this alone no fond adieus I seek,
No fainting mother's lips have press'd my
cheek; 186

By gloomy night and thy right hand I vow
Her parting tears would shake my pur-
pose now:

Do thou, my prince, her failing age sustain,
In thee her much-loved child may live
again; 190

Her dying hours with pious conduct bless,
Assist her wants, relieve her fond distress:

So dear a hope must all my soul inflame,
To rise in glory, or to fall in fame.'

Struck with a filial care so deeply felt, 195
In tears at once the Trojan warriors melt;
Faster than all, Iulus' eyes o'erflow!

Such love was his, and such had been his
woe.

'All thou hast ask'd, receive,' the prince
replied;

'Nor this alone, but many a gift beside.
To cheer thy mother's years shall be my
aim, 201

Creusa's style but wanting to the dame.
Fortune an adverse wayward course may
run,

But bless'd thy mother in so dear a son.
Now, by my life!—my sire's most sacred
oath— 205

To thee I pledge my full, my firmest troth,
All the rewards which once to thee were
vow'd,

If thou shouldst fall, on her shall be be-
stow'd.'

Thus spoke the weeping prince, then forth
to view

A gleaming falchion from the sheath he
drew;

Lycaon's utmost skill had graced the steel,
For friends to envy and for foes to feel:

A tawny hide, the Moorish lion's spoil,
Slain 'midst the forest, in the hunter's toil,

Mnestheus to guard the elder youth be-
stows, 215

And old Alethes' casque defends his
brows.

Arm'd, thence they go, while all th' as-
sembled train,

To aid their cause, implore the gods in vain.
More than a boy, in wisdom and in grace,
Iulus holds amidst the chiefs his place:

His prayer he sends; but what can prayers
avail, 221

Lost in the murmurs of the sighing gale?

The trench is pass'd, and, favour'd by
the night,

Through sleeping foes they wheel their
wary flight.

When shall the sleep of many a foe be o'er?
Alas! some slumber who shall wake no
more! 226

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Chariots and bridles, mix'd with arms, are
seen;

And flowing flasks, and scatter'd troops
between:

Bacchus and Mars to rule the camp com-
bine;

A mingled chaos this of war and wine.

'Now,' cries the first, 'for deeds of blood
prepare,

With me the conquest and the labour share:
Here lies our path; lest any hand arise,
Watch thou, while many a dreaming
chieftain dies:

I'll carve our passage through the heed-
less foe,

And clear thy road with many a deadly
blow.'

His whispering accents then the youth re-
press'd,

And pierced proud Rhamnes through his
panting breast:

Stretch'd at his ease, th' incautious king
reposed;

Debauch, and not fatigue, his eyes had
closed:

To Turnus dear, a prophet and a prince,
His omens more than augur's skill evince;
But he, who thus foretold the fate of all,
Could not avert his own untimely fall.

Next Remus' armour-bearer, hapless, fell,
And three unhappy slaves the carnage
swell;

The charioteer along his courser's sides
Expires, the steel his sever'd neck divides;
And, last, his lord is number'd with the
dead:

Bounding convulsive, flies the gasping
head;

From the swell'd veins the blackening tor-
rents pour;

Stain'd is the couch and earth with clot-
ting gore.

Young Lamyus and Lamus next expire,
And gay Serranus, fill'd with youthful fire;
Half the long night in childish games was
pass'd;

Lull'd by the potent grape, he slept at last:
Ah! happier far had he the morn survey'd,
And till Aurora's dawn his skill display'd.

In slaughter'd fold, the keepers lost in
sleep,

His hungry fangs a lion thus may steep;
'Mid the sad flock, at dead of night he
prowls,

With murder glutted, and in carnage
rolls:

Insatiate still, through teeming herds he
roams;

In seas of gore the lordly tyrant foams.

Nor less the other's deadly vengeance
came,

But falls on feeble crowds without a name;

His wound unconscious Fadus scarce can
feel,

Yet wakeful Rhæsus sees the threatening
steel;

His coward breast behind a jar he hides,
And vainly in the weak defence confides;
Full in his heart, the falchion search'd his
veins,

The reeking weapon bears alternate stains;
Through wine and blood, commingling as
they flow,

One feeble spirit seeks the shades below.
Now where Messapus dwelt they bend
their way,

Whose fires emit a faint and trembling
ray;

There, unconfined, behold each grazing
steed,

Unwatch'd, unheeded, on the herbage
feed:

Brave Nisus here arrests his comrade's
arm,

Too flush'd with carnage, and with
conquest warm:

'Hence let us haste, the dangerous path
is pass'd;

Full foes enough to-night have breathed
their last:

Soon will the day those eastern clouds
adorn;

Now let us speed, nor tempt the rising
morn.'

What silver arms, with various art em-
boss'd,

What bowls and mantles in confusion
toss'd,

They leave regardless! yet one glittering
prize

Attracts the younger hero's wandering
eyes;

The gilded harness Rhamne: ' coursers
felt,

The gems which stud the monarch's
golden belt:

This from the pallid corse was quickly
torn,

Once by a line of former chieftains worn.
Th' exulting boy the studded girdle wears,
Messapus' helm his head in triumph
bears;

Then from the tents their cautious steps
they bend,

To seek the vale where safer paths extend.

Just at this hour, a band of Latian
horse

To Turnus' camp pursue their destined
course:

While the slow foot their tardy march de-
lay,

The knights, impatient, spur along the
way:

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Three hundred mail-clad men, by Volscens
 led,
 To Turnus with their master's promise
 sped:
 Now they approach the trench, and view
 the walls,
 When, on the left, a light reflection falls;
 The plunder'd helmet, through the
 waning night, 305
 Sheds forth a silver radiance, glancing
 bright.
 Volscens with question loud the pair
 alarms:—
 'Stand, stragglers! stand! why early thus
 in arms?
 From whence! to whom?'—He meets
 with no reply;
 Trusting the covert of the night, they fly:
 The thicket's depth with hurried pace
 they tread, 311
 While round the wood the hostile squad-
 ron spread.

With brakes entangled, scarce a path
 between,
 Dreary and dark appears the sylvan
 scene:
 Euryalus his heavy spoils impede, 315
 The boughs and winding turns his steps
 mislead;
 But Nisus scours along the forest's maze
 To where Latinus' steeds in safety graze,
 Then backward o'er the plain his eyes
 extend, 319
 On every side they seek his absent friend.
 'O God! my boy,' he cries, 'of me bereft,
 In what impending perils art thou left!'
 Listening he runs—above the waving trees,
 Tumultuous voices swell the passing
 breeze;
 The war-cry rises, thundering hoofs
 around 325
 Wake the dark echoes of the trembling
 ground.
 Again he turns, of footsteps hears the
 noise;
 The sound elates, the sight his hope de-
 stroys:
 The hapless boy a ruffian train surround,
 While lengthening shades his weary way
 confound; 330
 Him with loud shouts the furious knights
 pursue,
 Struggling in vain, a captive to the crew.
 What can his friend 'gainst thronging
 numbers dare?
 Ah! must he rush his comrade's fate to
 share?
 What force, what aid, what stratagem
 essay, 335
 Back to redeem the Latian spoiler's prey?
 His life a votive ransom nobly give,
 Or die with him for whom he wish'd to
 live?

Poising with strength his lifted lance on
 high,
 On Luna's orb he cast his frenzied eye:—
 'Goddess serene, transcending every star!
 Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen
 afar! 342
 By night heaven owns thy sway, by day
 the grove,
 When, as chaste Dian, here thou deign'st
 to rove;
 If e'er myself, or sire, have sought to
 grace 345
 Thine altars with the produce of the chase,
 Speed, speed my dart to pierce yon vaunt-
 ing crowd,
 To free my friend, and scatter far the
 proud.'
 Thus having said, the hissing dart he
 flung;
 Through parted shades the hurtling
 weapon sung; 350
 The thirsty point in Sulmo's entrails lay,
 Transfix'd his heart, and stretch'd him on
 the clay:
 He sobs, he dies,—the troop in wild
 amaze,
 Unconscious whence the death, with
 horror gaze.
 While pale they stare, through Tagus'
 temples riven, 355
 A second shaft with equal force is driven:
 Fierce Volscens rolls around his lowering
 eyes;
 Veil'd by the night, secure the Trojan
 lies.
 Burning with wrath, he view'd his soldiers
 fall.
 'Thou youth accurst, thy life shall pay for
 all!' 360
 Quick from the sheath his flaming glaive
 he drew,
 And, raging, on the boy defenceless flew.
 Nisus no more the blackening shade con-
 ceals,
 Forth, forth he starts, and all his love
 reveals;
 Aghast, confused, his fears to madness
 rise, 365
 And pour these accents, shrieking as he
 flies:
 'Me, me,—your vengeance hurl on me
 alone;
 Here sheathe the steel, my blood is all
 your own,
 Ye starry spheres! thou conscious Heaven!
 attest!
 He could not—durst not—lo! the guile
 confest! 370
 All, all was mine,—his early fate suspend;
 He only loved too well his hapless friend:
 Spare, spare, ye chiefs! from him your
 rage remove;
 His fault was friendship, all his crime was
 love.'

HOURS OF IDLENESS

He pray'd in vain; the dark assassin's
sword 375
Pierced the fair side, the snowy bosom
gored;

Lowly to earth inclines his plume-clad
crest,
And sanguine torrents mantle o'er his
breast:

As some young rose, whose blossom
scents the air,
Languid in death, expires beneath the
share; 380

Or crimson poppy, sinking with the shower,
Declining gently, falls a fading flower;
Thus, sweetly drooping, bends his lovely
head,

And lingering beauty hovers round the
dead.

But fiery Nisus stems the battle's tide,
Revenge his leader, and despair his guide;
Volskens he seeks amidst the gathering
host, 387

Volskens must soon appease his comrade's
ghost;

Steel, flashing, pours on steel, foe crowds
on foe;

Rage nerves his arm, fate gleams in every
blow; 390

In vain beneath unnumber'd wounds he
bleeds,

Nor wounds, nor death, distracted Nisus
heeds;

In viewless circles wheel'd, his falchion flies,
Nor quits the hero's grasp till Volskens
dies;

Deep in his throat its end the weapon found,
The tyrant's soul fled groaning through
the wound. 396

Thus Nisus all his fond affection proved—
Dying, revenged the fate of him he loved;
Then on his bosom sought his wonted
place,

And death was heavenly in his friend's
embrace! 400

Celestial pair! if aught my verse can
claim,
Wafted on Time's broad pinion, yours is
fame!

Ages on ages shall your fate admire,
No future day shall see your names
expire,

While stands the Capitol, immortal dome!
And vanquish'd millions hail their em-
press, Rome! 406

TRANSLATION FROM THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

[*Ἐρωτες ὁμιλῶ μὲν διὰ τὴν κ. τ. λ.*]

WHEN fierce conflicting passions urge
The breast where love is wont to glow,
What mind can stem the stormy surge
Which rolls the tide of human woe?

The hope of praise, the dread of shame,
Can rouse the tortured breast no more;
The wild desire, the guilty flame,
Absorbs each wish it felt before.

But if affection gently thrills
The soul by purer dreams possess'd, 10
The pleasing balm of mortal ills
In love can soothe the aching breast:
If thus thou comest in disguise,
Fair Venus! from thy native heaven,
What heart unfeeling would despise 15
The sweetest boon the gods have given?

But never from thy golden bow
May I beneath the shaft expire!
Whose creeping venom, sure and slow,
Awakes an all-consuming fire: 20
Ye racking doubts! ye jealous fears!
With others wage internal war;
Repentance, source of future tears,
From me be ever distant far!

May no distracting thoughts destroy 25
The holy calm of sacred love!
May all the hours be wing'd with joy,
Which hover faithful hearts above!
Fair Venus! on thy myrtle shrine
May I with some fond lover sigh, 30
Whose heart may mingle pure with mine—
With me to live, with me to die!

My native soil! beloved before,
Now dearer as my peaceful home,
Ne'er may I quit thy rocky shore, 35
A hapless banish'd wretch to roam!
This very day, this very hour,
May I resign this fleeting breath!
Nor quit my silent humble bower; 39
A doom to me far worse than death.

Have I not heard the exile's sigh,
And seen the exile's silent tear,
Through distant climes condemn'd to fly,
A pensive weary wanderer here?
Ah! hapless dame! no sire bewails, 45
No friend thy wretched fate deplores,
No kindred voice with rapture hails
Thy steps within a stranger's doors.

Perish the fiend whose iron heart,
To fair affection's truth unknown, 50
Bids her he fondly loved depart,
Unpitied, helpless, and alone;
Who ne'er unlocks with silver key
The milder treasures of his soul,—
May such a friend be far from me, 55
And ocean's storms between us roll!

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A COLLEGE EXAMINATION

HIGH in the midst, surrounded by his
peers,
MAGNUS his ample front sublime up-
rears:

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Placed on his chair of state, he seems a god,
While Sophs and Freshmen tremble at
his nod.
As all around sit wrapt in speechless gloom,
His voice in thunder shakes the sounding
dome; 6
Denouncing dire reproach to luckless
fools,
Unskill'd to plod in mathematic rules.

Happy the youth in Euclid's axioms
tried,
Though little versed in any art beside; 10
Who, scarcely skill'd an English line to
pen,
Scans Attic metres with a critic's ken.
What, though he knows not how his
fathers bled,
When civil discord piled the fields with
dead,
When Edward bade his conquering bands
advance, 15
Or Henry trampled on the crest of France,
Though marvelling at the name of
Magna Charta,
Yet well he recollects the laws of Sparta;
Can tell what edicts sage Lycurgus made,
While Blackstone's on the shelf neglected
laid; 20
Of Grecian dramas vaunts the deathless
fame,
Of Avon's bard remembering scarce the
name.

Such is the youth whose scientific pate
Class-honours, medals, fellowships, await;
Or even, perhaps, the declamation prize,
If to such glorious height he lifts his
eyes. 26
But lo! no common orator can hope
The envied silver cup within his scope.
Not that our heads much eloquence
require,
Th' ATHENIAN's glowing style, or Tully's
fire. 30
A manner clear or warm is useless, since
We do not try by speaking to convince.
Be other orators of pleasing proud,—
We speak to please ourselves, not move
the crowd:
Our gravity prefers the muttering tone,
A proper mixture of the squeak and
groan; 36
No borrow'd grace of action must be seen;
The slightest motion would displease the
Dean;
Whilst every staring graduate would
prate
Against what he could never imitate. 40
The man who hopes t' obtain the pro-
mised cup
Must in one posture stand, and ne'er look
up;

Nor stop, but rattle over every word—
No matter what, so it can *not* be heard.
Thus let him hurry on, nor think to rest:
Who speaks the fastest's sure to speak the
best; 46
Who utters most within the shortest space
May safely hope to win the wordy race.

The sons of science these, who, thus
repaid,
Linger in ease in Granta's sluggish shade;
Where on Cam's sedgy banks supine they
lie, 51
Unknown, unhonour'd live, unwept-for
die:
Dull as the pictures which adorn their
halls,
They think all learning fix'd within their
walls:
In manners rude, in foolish forms pre-
cise, 55
All modern arts affecting to despise;
Yet prizing Bentley's, Brunck's, or Por-
son's note,
More than the verse on which the critic
wrote:
Vain as their honours, heavy as their
ale,
Sad as their wit, and tedious as their
tale; 60
To friendship dead, though not untaught
to feel
When Self and Church demand a bigot
zeal.
With eager haste they court the lord of
power,
Whether 'tis Pitt or Petty rules the hour;
To him, with suppliant smiles, they bend
the head, 65
While distant mitres to their eyes are
spread.
But should a storm o'erwhelm him with
disgrace,
They'd fly to seek the next who fill'd his
place.
Such are the men who learning's treasures
guard!
Such is their practice, such is their reward!
This much, at least, we may presume to
say— 71
The premium can't exceed the price they
pay.

1806.

TO A BEAUTIFUL QUAKER

SWEET girl! though only once we met,
That meeting I shall ne'er forget;
And though we ne'er may meet again,
Remembrance will thy form retain.
I would not say, 'I love,' but still 5
My senses struggle with my will:
In vain, to drive thee from my breast,
My thoughts are more and more repress;

HOURS OF IDLENESS

In vain I check the rising sighs,
Another to the last replies:
Perhaps this is not love, but yet
Our meeting I can ne'er forget.

What though we never silence broke,
Our eyes a sweeter language spoke;
The tongue in flattering falsehood deals,
And tells a tale it never feels: 16
Deceit the guilty lips impart,
And hush the mandates of the heart;
But soul's interpreters, the eyes,
Spurn such restraint, and scorn disguise.
As thus our glances oft conversed, 21
And all our bosoms felt rehearsed,
No spirit, from within, reproved us,
Say rather, 'twas the spirit moved us.'
Though what they utter'd I repress, 25
Yet I conceive thou'lt partly guess;
For as on thee my memory ponders,
Perchance to me thine also wanders.
This for myself, at least, I'll say,
Thy form appears through night, through
day; 30
Awake, with it my fancy teems;
In sleep, it smiles in fleeting dreams;
The vision charms the hours away,
And bids me curse Aurora's ray
For breaking slumbers of delight 35
Which make me wish for endless night.
Since, oh! whate'er my future fate,
Shall joy or woe my steps await,
Tempted by love, by storms beset,
Thine image I can ne'er forget. 40

Alas! again no more we meet,
No more our former looks repeat;
Then let me breathe this parting prayer,
The dictate of my bosom's care:
'May Heaven so guard my lovely quaker,
That anguish never can o'ertake her; 46
That peace and virtue ne'er forsake her,
But bliss be aye her heart's partaker!
Oh! may the happy mortal, fated
To be, by dearest ties, related, 50
For her each hour new joys discover,
And lose the husband in the lover!
May that fair bosom never know
What 'tis to feel the restless woe
Which stings the soul, with vain regret, 55
Of him who never can forget!'

THE CORNELIAN

No specious splendour of this stone
Endears it to my memory ever;
With lustre only once it shone,
And blushes modest as the giver. 4
Some, who can sneer at friendship's ties,
Have, for my weakness, oft reproved
me;
Yet still the simple gift I prize,
For I am sure the giver loved me.

He offer'd it with downcast look,
As fearful that I might refuse it;
I told him, when the gift I took,
My only fear should be to lose it.

This pledge attentively I view'd,
And sparkling as I held it near,
Methought one drop the stone bedew'd,
And ever since I've loved a tear. 16

Still, to adorn his humble youth,
Nor wealth nor birth their treasures
yield;
But he who seeks the flowers of truth
Must quit the garden for the field. 20

'Tis not the plant uprear'd in sloth,
Which beauty shows, and sheds per-
fume;
The flowers which yield the most of both
In Nature's wild luxuriance bloom.

Had Fortune aided Nature's care, 25
For once forgetting to be blind,
His would have been an ample share,
If well proportion'd to his mind.

But had the goddess clearly seen, 29
His form had fix'd her fickle breast;
Her countless hoards would his have been,
And none remain'd to give the rest.

AN OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE PERFOR-
MANCE OF 'THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE' AT
A PRIVATE THEATRE

SINCE the refinement of this polish'd age
Has swept immoral raillery from the stage;
Since taste has now expunged licentious
wit,

Which stamp'd disgrace on all an author
writ;

Since now to please with purer scenes we
seek, 5

Nor dare to call the blush from Beauty's
cheek;

Oh! let the modest Muse some pity claim,
And meet indulgence, though she find not
fame. 1

Still, not for her alone we wish respect,
Others appear more conscious of defect;
To-night no veteran Rosciii you behold,
In all the arts of scenic action old; 12

No Cooke, no Kemble, can salute you
here,

No Siddons draw the sympathetic tear;
To-night you throng to witness the *début*
Of embryo actors, to the Drama new:

Here, then, our almost unfledged wings we
try; 17

Clip not our pinions ere the birds can fly:
Failing in this our first attempt to soar,
Drooping, alas! we fall to rise no more.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Not one poor trembler only fear betrays
 Who hopes, yet almost dreads, to meet
 your praise,
 But all our dramatis personæ wait
 In fond suspense this crisis of their fate.
 No venal views our progress can retard, 25
 Your generous plaudits are our sole reward.
 For these, each Hero all his power displays,
 Each timid Heroine shrinks before your
 gaze.
 Surely the last will some protection find;
 None to the softer sex can prove unkind:
 While Youth and Beauty form the female
 shield, 31
 The sternest censor to the fair must yield.
 Yet, should our feeble efforts nought avail,
 Should, after all, our best endeavours fail,
 Still let some mercy in your bosoms live,
 And, if you can't applaud, at least forgive.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. FOX

THE FOLLOWING ILIBERAL IMPROMPTU
 APPEARED IN A MORNING PAPER

'OUR nation's foes lament on Fox's death,
 But bless the hour when PITT resign'd his
 breath:
 These feelings wide, let sense and truth
 unclue,
 We give the palm where Justice points its
 due.'

TO WHICH THE AUTHOR OF THESE PIECES
 SENT THE FOLLOWING REPLY

OH factious viper! whose envenom'd
 tooth
 Would mangle still the dead, perverting
 truth;
 What though our 'nation's foes' lament
 the fate,
 With generous feeling, of the good and great,
 Shall dastard tongues essay to blast the
 name 5
 Of him whose meed exists in endless fame?
 When PITT expired in plenitude of power,
 Though ill success obscured his dying hour,
 Pity her dewy wings before him spread,
 For noble spirits 'war not with the dead.'
 His friends, in tears, a last sad requiem
 gave, 11
 As all his errors slumber'd in the grave;
 He sunk, an Atlas bending 'neath the
 weight
 Of cares o'erwhelming our conflicting
 state:
 When, lo! a Hercules in Fox appear'd, 15
 Who for a time the ruin'd fabric rear'd:
 He, too, is fall'n, who Britain's loss
 supplied,
 With him our fast reviving hopes have
 died;
 Not one great people only raise his urn,
 All Europe's far-extended regions mourn.

'These feelings wide, let sense and truth
 unclue, 21
 To give the palm where Justice points its
 due;
 Yet let not canker'd Calumny assail,
 Or round our statesman wind her gloomy
 veil.
 Fox! o'er whose corse a mourning world
 must weep, 25
 Whose dear remains in honour'd marble
 sleep;
 For whom, at last, e'en hostile nations
 groan,
 While friends and foes alike his talents own;
 Fox shall in Britain's future annals shine,
 Nor e'en to PITT the patriot's palm resign;
 Which Envy, wearing Candour's sacred
 mask, 31
 For PITT, and PITT alone, has dared to
 ask.

THE TEAR

'O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
 Ductum ortus ex animo; quater
 Felix! in imo qui scatenem
 Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensis.'—GRAY.

WHEN Friendship or Love our sympathies
 move,
 When Truth in a glance should appear,
 The lips may beguile with a dimple or
 smile,
 But the test of affection 's a Tear.

Too oft is a smile but the hypocrite's wile,
 To mask detestation or fear; 6
 Give me the soft sigh, whilst the soul-
 telling eye
 Is dimm'd for a time with a Tear.

Mild Charity's glow, to us mortals below,
 Shows the soul from barbarity clear; 10
 Compassion will melt where this virtue is
 felt,
 And its dew is diffused in a Tear.

The man doom'd to sail with the blast of
 the gale,
 Through billows Atlantic to steer,
 As he bends o'er the wave which may
 soon be his grave, 15
 The green sparkles bright with a Tear.

The soldier braves death for a fanciful
 wreath
 In Glory's romantic career;
 But he raises the foe when in battle laid
 low,
 And bathes every wound with a Tear.

If with high-bounding pride he return to
 his bride, 21
 Renouncing the gore-crimson'd spear,
 All his toils are repaid when, embracing
 the maid,
 From her eyelid he kisses the Tear.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Sweet scene of my youth! seat of Friend-
ship and Truth, ²⁵
Where love chased each fast-fleeting
year,
Loth to leave thee, I mourn'd, for a last
look I turn'd,
But thy spire was scarce seen through a
Tear.

Though my vows I can pour to my Mary
no more,
My Mary to Love once so dear, ³⁰
In the shade of her bower I remember the
hour
She rewarded those vows with a Tear.

By another possest, may she live ever blest!
Her name still my heart must revere:
With a sigh I resign what I once thought
was mine, ³⁵
And forgive her deceit with a Tear.

Ye friends of my heart, ere from you I de-
part,
This hope to my breast is most near:
If again we shall meet in this rural retreat,
May we meet, as we part, with a Tear.

When my soul wings her flight to the
regions of night, ⁴¹
And my corse shall recline on its bier,
As ye pass by the tomb where my ashes
consume,
Oh! moisten their dust with a Tear.

May no marble bestow the splendour of
woe ⁴⁵
Which the children of vanity rear;
No fiction of fame shall blazon my name.
All I ask—all I wish—is a Tear.

October 26, 1806.

REPLY TO SOME VERSES OF J. M. B. PIGOT, ESQ., ON THE CRUELTY OF HIS MISTRESS

WHY, Pigot, complain of this damsel's dis-
dain,
Why thus in despair do you fret?
For months you may try, yet, believe me,
a sigh
Will never obtain a coquette.

Would you teach her to love? for a time
seem to rove; ⁵
At first she may frown in a pet;
But leave her awhile, she shortly will
smile,
And then you may kiss your coquette.

For such are the airs of these fanciful
fairs,
They think all our homage a debt: ¹⁰
Yet a partial neglect soon takes an effect,
And humbles the proudest coquette.

Dissemble your pain, and lengthen your
chain,
And seem her hauteur to regret;
If again you shall sigh, she no more will
deny, ¹⁵
That yours is the rosy coquette.

If still, from false pride, your pangs she
deride,
This whimsical virgin forget;
Some other admire, who will melt with
your fire,
And laugh at the little coquette. ²⁰

For me, I adore some twenty or more,
And love them most dearly; but yet,
Though my heart they enthrall, I'd aban-
don them all,
Did they act like your blooming
coquette.

No longer repine, adopt this design, ²⁵
And break through her slight-woven
net;
Away with despair, no longer forbear
To fly from the captious coquette.

Then quit her, my friend! your bosom defend,
Ere quite with her snares you're beset;
Lest your deep-wounded heart, when in-
censed by the smart, ³¹
Should lead you to curse the coquette.

October 27, 1806.

TO THE SIGHING STREPHON

YOUR pardon, my friend, if my rhymes
did offend;
Your pardon, a thousand times o'er:
From friendship I strove your pangs to
remove,
But, I swear, I will do so no more.

Since your beautiful maid your flame has
repaid, ⁵
No more I your folly regret;
She's now most divine, and I bow at the
shrine
Of this quickly reformed coquette.

Yet still, I must own, I should never have
known
From your verses what else she de-
served; ¹⁰
Your pain seem'd so great, I pitied your
fate,
As your fair was so devilish reserved.

Since the balm-breathing kiss of this
magical miss
Can such wonderful transports produce;
Since the 'world you forget, when your
lips once have met,' ¹⁵
My counsel will get but abuse.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

LACHIN Y GAIR

You say, when 'I rove, I know nothing
of love;

'Tis true, I am given to range;
If I rightly remember, I've loved a good
number,
Yet there's pleasure, at least, in a change.

I will not advance, by the rules of ro-
mance, 21

To humour a whimsical fair;
Though a smile may delight, yet a frown
won't affright,
Or drive me to dreadful despair.

While my blood is thus warm I ne'er shall
reform, 25

To mix in the Platonists' school;
Of this I am sure, was my passion so pure,
Thy mistress would think me a fool.

And if I should shun every woman for one,
Whose image must fill my whole
breast— 30

Whom I must prefer, and sigh but for
her—

What an insult 'twould be to the rest!

Now, Strephon, good bye, I cannot deny
Your passion appears most absurd;

Such love as you plead is pure love in-
deed, 35

For it only consists in the word.

TO ELIZA

ELIZA, what fools are the Mussulman sect,
Who to woman deny the soul's future
existence!

Could they see thee, Eliza, they'd own
their defect,

And this doctrine would meet with a
general resistance.

Had their prophet possess'd half an atom
of sense, 5

He ne'er would have women from para-
dise driven;

Instead of his boursis, a flimsy pretence,
With women alone he had peopled his
heaven.

Yet still, to increase your calamities more,
Not content with depriving your bodies
of spirit, 10

He allots one poor husband to share
amongst four!—

With souls you'd dispense; but this
last, who could bear it?

His religion to please neither party is
made;

On husbands 'tis hard, to the wives
most uncivil;

Still I can't contradict, what so oft has
been said, 15

'Though women are angels, yet wed-
lock's the devil.'

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of
roses!

In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks, where the snow-
flake reposes,

Though still they are sacred to freedom
and love:

Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy moun-
tains, 5

Round their white summits though
elements war;

Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-
flowing fountains,

I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy
wander'd;

My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was
the plaid; 10

On chieftains long perish'd my memory
ponder'd,

As daily I strode through the pine-
cover'd glade;

I sought not my home till the day's dying
glory

Gave place to the rays of the bright
polar star;

For fancy was cheer'd by traditional
story, 15

Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch
na Garr.

'Shades of the dead! have I not heard
your voices

Rise on the night-rolling breath of the
gale?'

Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
And rides on the wind, o'er his own
Highland vale. 20

Round Loch na Garr while the stormy
mist gathers,

Winter presides in his cold icy car:
Clouds there encircle the forms of my
fathers;

They dwell in the tempests of dark
Loch na Garr.

'Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions
foreboding 25

Tell you that fate had forsaken your
cause?'

Ah! were you destined to die at Cullo-
den,

Victory crown'd not your fall with ap-
plause:

Still were you happy in death's earthly
slumber,

You rest with your clan in the caves of
Braemar; 30

The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud
number,

Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch
na Garr.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr,
 since I left you,
 Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
 Nature of verdure and flow'rs has bereft
 you, 35
 Yet still are you dearer than Albion's
 plain.
 England! thy beauties are tame and
 domestic
 To one who has roved o'er the mountains
 afar:
 Oh for the crags that are wild and
 majestic!
 The steep frowning glories of dark
 Loch na Garr. 40

TO ROMANCE

PARENT of golden dreams, Romance!
 Auspicious queen of childish joys,
 Who lead'st along, in airy dance,
 Thy votive train of girls and boys;
 At length, in spells no longer bound, 5
 I break the fetters of my youth;
 No more I tread thy mystic round,
 But leave thy realms for those of Truth.

And yet 'tis hard to quit the dreams
 Which haunt the unsuspecting soul, 10
 Where every nymph a goddess seems,
 Whose eyes through rays immortal roll;
 While Fancy holds her boundless reign,
 And all assume a varied hue;
 When virgins seem no longer vain, 15
 And even woman's smiles are true.

And must we own thee but a name,
 And from thy hall of clouds descend?
 Nor find a sylph in every dame,
 A Pylades in every friend? 20
 But leave at once thy realms of air
 To mingling bands of fairy elves;
 Confess that woman's false as fair,
 And friends have feeling for—their-
 selves!

With shame I own I've felt thy sway; 25
 Repentant, now thy reign is o'er,
 No more thy precepts I obey,
 No more on fancied pinions soar.
 Fond fool! to love a sparkling eye,
 And think that eye to truth was dear;
 To trust a passing wanton's sigh, 31
 And melt beneath a wanton's tear!

Romance! disgusted with deceit,
 Far from thy motley court I fly,
 Where Affectation holds her seat,
 And sickly Sensibility;
 Whose silly tears can never flow
 For any pangs excepting thine;
 Who turns aside from real woe,
 To steep in dew thy gaudy shrine. 40

Now join with sable Sympathy,
 With cypress crown'd, array'd in weeds,
 Who heaves with thee her simple sigh,
 Whose breast for every bosom bleeds;
 And call thy sylvan female choir, 45
 To mourn a swain for ever gone,
 Who once could glow with equal fire,
 But bends not now before thy throne.

Ye genial nymphs, whose ready tears
 On all occasions swiftly flow; 50
 Whose bosoms heave with fancied fears,
 With fancied flames and phrensy glow;
 Say, will you mourn my absent name,
 Apostate from your gentle train?
 An infant bard at least may claim 55
 From you a sympathetic strain.

Adieu, fond race! a long adieu!
 The hour of fate is hovering nigh,
 E'en now the gulf appears in view,
 Where unlamented you must lie: 60
 Oblivion's blackening lake is seen,
 Convulsed by gales you cannot weather;
 Where you, and eke your gentle queen,
 Alas! must perish altogether.

ANSWER TO SOME ELEGANT VERSES SENT BY A FRIEND TO THE AUTHOR, COMPLAINING THAT ONE OF HIS DESCRIPTIONS WAS RATHER TOO WARMLY DRAWN

'But if any old lady, knight, priest, or physician,
 Should condemn me for printing a second edition;

If good Madam Squintum my work should abuse,
 May I venture to give her a smack of my muse?"
New Bath Guide.

CANDOUR compels me, BECHER! to commend
 The verse which blends the censor with
 the friend.
 Your strong yet just reproach extorts applause
 From me, the heedless and imprudent
 cause.
 For this wild error which pervades my
 strain, 5
 I sue for pardon,—must I sue in vain?
 The wise sometimes from Wisdom's ways
 depart:
 Can youth then hush the dictates of the
 heart?
 Precepts of prudence curb, but can't
 control,
 The fierce emotions of the flowing soul. 10
 When Love's delirium haunts the glowing
 mind,
 Limping Decorum lingers far behind:
 Vainly the dotard mends her prudish pace,
 Outstrip and vanquish'd in the mental
 chase.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

The young, the old, have worn the chains
of love; ¹⁵
Let those they ne'er confined my lay re-
prove:
Let those whose souls condemn the pleas-
ing power
Their censures on the hapless victim
shower.
Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,
The ceaseless echo of the rhyming throng,
Whose labour'd lines in chilling numbers
flow, ²¹
To paint a pang the author ne'er can
know!
The artless Helicon I boast is youth;—
My lyre, the heart; my muse, the simple
truth.
Far be 't from me the 'virgin's mind' to
'taint': ²⁵
Seduction's dread is here no slight re-
straint.
The maid whose virgin breast is void of
guile,
Whose wishes dimple in a modest smile,
Whose downcast eye disdains the wanton
leer,
Firm in her virtue's strength, yet not
severe— ³⁰
She whom a conscious grace shall thus
refine
Will ne'er be 'tainted' by a strain of
mine.
But for the nymph whose premature
desires
Torment her bosom with unholy fires,
No net to snare her willing heart is
spread; ³⁵
She would have fallen, though she ne'er
had read.
For me, I fain would please the chosen
few,
Whose souls, to feeling and to nature true,
Will spare the childish verse, and not de-
stroy
The light effusions of a heedless boy. ⁴⁰
I seek not glory from the senseless crowd;
Of fancied laurels I shall ne'er be proud;
Their warmest plaudits I would scarcely
prize,
Their sneers or censures I alike despise.
November 26, 1806.

ELEGY ON NEWSTEAD ABBEY

'It is the voice of years that are gone! they roll
before me with all their deeds.'—OSSIAN.

NEWSTEAD! fast-falling, once-resplendent
dome!
Religion's shrine! repentant HENRY'S
pride!
Of warriors, monks, and dames the clois-
ter'd tomb,
Whose pensive shades around thy
ruins glide,

Hail to thy pile! more honour'd in thy
fall ⁵
Than modern mansions in their pillar'd
state;
Proudly majestic frowns thy vaulted hall,
Scowling defiance on the blasts of fate.

No mail-clad serfs, obedient to their lord,
In grim array the crimson cross de-
mand; ¹⁰
Or gay assemble round the festive board
Their chief's retainers, an immortal
band:

Else might inspiring Fancy's magic eye
Retrace their progress through the
lapse of time,
Marking each ardent youth, ordain'd to
die, ¹⁵
A votive pilgrim in Judea's clime.

But not from thee, dark pile! departs the
chief;
His feudal realm in other regions lay:
In thee the wounded conscience courts
relief,
Retiring from the garish blaze of day.

Yes! in thy gloomy cells and shades pro-
found ²¹
The monk abjured a world he ne'er
could view;
Or blood-stain'd guilt repenting solace
found,
Or innocence from stern oppression flew.

A monarch bade thee from that wild
arise, ²⁵
Where Sherwood's outlaws once were
wont to prowl;
And Superstition's crimes, of various
dyes,
Sought shelter in the priest's protecting
cowl.

Where now the grass exhales a murky
dew,
The humid pall of life-extinguish'd
clay, ³⁰
In sainted fame the sacred fathers grew,
Nor raised their pious voices but to pray.

Where now the bats their wavering wings
extend
Soon as the gloaming spreads her
waning shade,
The choir did oft their mingling vespers
blend, ³⁵
Or matin orisons to Mary paid.

Years roll on years; to ages, ages yield;
Abbots to abbots, in a line, succeed;
Religion's charter their protecting shield,
Till royal sacrilege their doom decreed.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

One holy HENRY rear'd the Gothic walls,
And bade the pious inmates rest in
peace; 42

Another HENRY the kind gift recalls,
And bids devotion's hallow'd echoes
cease.

Vain is each threat or supplicating prayer;
He drives them exiles from their blest
abode, 46

To roam a dreary world in deep despair—
No friend, no home, no refuge, but
their God.

Hark how the hall, resounding to the
strain,
Shakes with the martial music's novel
din! 50

The heralds of a warrior's haughty reign,
High crested banners wave thy walls
within.

Of changing sentinels the distant hum,
The mirth of feasts, the clang of
burnish'd arms,
The braying trumpet and the hoarser
drum, 55
Unite in concert with increased alarms.

An abbey once, a regal fortress now,
Encircled by insulting rebel powers,
War's dread machines o'erhang thy
threat'ning brow,
And dart destruction in sulphureous
showers. 60

Ah vain defence! the hostile traitor's siege,
Though oft repulsed, by guile o'er-
comes the brave;
His thronging foes oppress the faithful
liege,
Rebellion's reeking standards o'er him
wave. 64

Not unavenged the raging baron yields;
The blood of traitors smears the purple
plain;
Unconquer'd still, his falchion there he
wields,
And days of glory yet for him remain.

Still in that hour the warrior wish'd to
strew
Self-gather'd laurels on a self-sought
grave; 70
But Charles' protecting genius hither flew,
The monarch's friend, the monarch's
hope, to save.

Trembling, she snatch'd him from th'
unequal strife,
In other fields the torrent to repel;
For nobler combats, here, reserved his life,
To lead the band where godlike FALK-
LAND fell. 76

From thee, poor pile! to lawless plunder
given,
While dying groans their painful re-
quiem sound,
Far different incense now ascends to
heaven,
Such victims wallow on the gory
ground. 80

There many a pale and ruthless robber's
corse,
Noisome and ghastr, defiles thy sacred
sod;
O'er mingling man, and horse commix'd
with horse,
Corruption's heap, the savage spoilers
trod.

Graves, long with rank and sighing weeds
o'erspread, 85
Ransack'd, resign perform their mortal
mould:
From ruffian fangs escape not e'en the
dead,
Raked from repose in search of buried
gold.

Hush'd is the harp, unstrung the warlike
lyre,
The minstrel's palsied hand reclines in
death; 90
No more he strikes the quivering chords
with fire,
Or sings the glories of the martial
wreath.

At length the sated murderers, gorged
with prey,
Retire: the clamour of the fight is o'er;
Silence again resumes her awful sway, 95
And sable Horror guards the massy
door.

Here Desolation holds her dreary court:
What satellites declare her dismal reign!
Shrieking their dirge, ill-omen'd birds
resort, 99
To flit their vigils in the hoary fane.

Soon a new morn's restoring beams dispel
The clouds of anarchy from Britain's
skies;
The fierce usurper seeks his native hell,
And Nature triumphs as the tyrant dies.

With storms she welcomes his expiring
groans; 105
Whirlwinds, responsive, greet his
labouring breath;
Earth shudders as her caves receive his
bones,
Loathing the offering of so dark a
death.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

The legal ruler now resumes the helm,
He guides through gentle seas the prow
of state; ¹¹⁰
Hope cheers, with wonted smiles, the
peaceful realm,
And heals the bleeding wounds of
wearied hate.

The gloomy tenants, Newstead! of thy
cells,
Howling, resign their violated nest;
Again the master on his tenure dwells,
Enjoy'd, from absence, with enraptured
zest. ¹¹⁶

Vassals, within thy hospitable pale,
Loudly carousing, bless their lord's
return;
Culture again adorns the gladdening vale,
And matrons, once lamenting, cease to
mourn. ¹²⁰

A thousand songs on tuneful echo float,
Unwonted foliage mantles o'er the
trees;
And hark! the horns proclaim a mellow
note,
The hunters' cry hangs lengthening on
the breeze.

Beneath their coursers' hoofs the valleys
shake: ¹²⁵
What fears, what anxious hopes, attend
the chase!
The dying stag seeks refuge in the lake;
Exulting shouts announce the finish'd
race.

Ah happy days! too happy to endure!
Such simple sports our plain forefathers
knew: ¹³⁰
No splendid vices glitter'd to allure;
Their joys were many, as their cares
were few.

From these descending, sons to sires
succeed;
Time steals along, and Death uprears
his dart;
Another chief impels the foaming steed,
Another crowd pursue the panting
hart. ¹³⁶

Newstead! what saddening change of
scene is thine!
Thy yawning arch betokens slow decay;
The last and youngest of a noble line
Now holds thy mouldering turrets in
his sway. ¹⁴⁰

Deserted now, he scans thy gray worn
towers;
Thy vaults, where dead of feudal ages
sleep;

Thy cloisters, pervious to the wintry
showers;
These, these he views, and views them
but to weep.

Yet are his tears no emblem of regret:
Cherish'd affection only bids them
flow. ¹⁴⁶
Pride, hope, and love forbid him to forget,
But warm his bosom with impassion'd
glow.

Yet he prefers thee to the gilded domes
Or gewgaw grottos of the vainly great,
Yet lingers 'mid thy damp and mossy
tombs, ¹⁵¹
Nor breathes a murmur 'gainst the will
of fate.

Haply thy sun, emerging, yet may shine,
Thee to irradiate with meridian ray;
Hours splendid as the past may still be
thine, ¹⁵⁵
And bless thy future as thy former day.

CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS

'I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to me.'

WHEN slow Disease, with all her host of
pains,
Chills the warm tide which flows along
the veins;
When Health, affrighted, spreads her rosy
wing,
And flies with every changing gale of
spring; ⁴
Not to the aching frame alone confined,
Unyielding pangs assail the drooping
mind:
What grisly forms, the spectre-train of woe,
Bid shuddering Nature shrink beneath
the blow,
With Resignation wage relentless strife,
While Hope retires appall'd, and clings to
life! ¹⁰
Yet less the pang when, through the
tedious hour,
Remembrance sheds around her genial
power,
Calls back the vanish'd days to rapture
given,
When love was bliss, and Beauty form'd
our heaven;
Or, dear to youth, portrays each childish
scene, ¹⁵
Those fairy bowers, where all in turn have
been.
As when through clouds that pour the
summer storm
The orb of day unveils his distant form,
Gilds with faint beams the crystal dews of
rain,
And dimly twinkles o'er the watery plain;

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Thus, while the future dark and cheerless
gleams, 21
The sun of memory, glowing through my
dreams,
Though sunk the radiance of his former
blaze,
To scenes far distant points his paler rays;
Still rules my senses with unbounded sway;
The past confounding with the present day.

Oft does my heart indulge the rising
thought, 27
Which still recurs, unlook'd for and un-
sought,

My soul to Fancy's fond suggestion yields,
And roams romantic o'er her airy fields.
Scenes of my youth, developed, crowd to
view, 31

To which I long have bade a last adieu!
Seats of delight, inspiring youthful themes;
Friends lost to me for aye, except in
dreams; 34

Some who in marble prematurely sleep,
Whose forms I now remember but to weep;
Some who yet urge the same scholastic
course

Of early science, future fame the source;
Who, still contending in the studious race,
In quick rotation fill the senior place. 40
These with a thousand visions now unite,
To dazzle, though they please, my aching
sight.

IDA! blest spot, where Science holds her
reign,

How joyous once I join'd thy youthful
train!

Bright in idea gleams thy lofty spire, 45
Again I mingle with thy playful quire;
Our tricks of mischief, every childish game,
Unchanged by time or distance, seem the
same;

Through winding paths along the glade, I
trace

The social smile of every welcome face; 50
My wonted haunts, my scenes of joy and
woe.

Each early boyish friend, or youthful foe,
Our feuds dissolved, but not my friendship
past,—

I bless the former, and forgive the last.
Hours of my youth! when, nurtured in my
breast, 55

To love a stranger, friendship made me
blest,—

Friendship, the dear peculiar bond of
youth,

When every artless bosom throbs with
truth;

Untaught by worldly wisdom how to feign,
And check each impulse with prudential
rein; 60

When all we feel, our honest souls dis-
close—

In love to friends, in open hate to foes;

No varnish'd tales the lips of youth repeat,
No dear-bought knowledge purchased by
deceit,

Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen'd years, 65
Matured by age, the garb of prudence
wears.

When now the boy is ripen'd into man,
His careful sire chalks forth some wary
plan;

Instructs his son from candour's path to
shrink,

Smoothly to speak, and cautiously to think;
Still to assent, and never to deny— 71

A patron's praise can well reward the lie:
And who, when Fortune's warning voice is
heard,

Would lose his opening prospects for a word,
Although against that word his heart rebel,
And truth indignant all his bosom swell.

Away with themes like this! not mine
the task 77

From flattering friends to tear the hateful
mask;

Let keener bards delight in satire's sting;
My fancy soars not on Detraction's wing:

Once, and but once, she aim'd a deadly
blow, 81

To hurl defiance on a secret foe;
But when that foe, from feeling or from
shame,

The cause unknown, yet still to me the
same,

Warn'd by some friendly hint, perchance,
retired, 85

With this submission all her rage expired.
From dreaded pangs that feeble foe to save,

She hush'd her young resentment, and for-
gave;

Or, if my muse a pedant's portrait drew,
POMPOSUS' virtues are but known to few:
I never fear'd the young usurper's nod,
And he who wields must sometimes feel the
rod. 92

If since on Granta's far'ings, known to all
Who share the converse of a college hall,
She sometimes trifled in a lighter strain,
'Tis past, and thus she will not sin again;
Soon must her early song for ever cease,
And all may rail when I shall rest in peace.

Here first remember'd be the joyous
band,

Who hail'd me chief, obedient to com-
mand; 100

Who join'd with me in every boyish
sport—

Their first adviser, and their last resort;
Nor shrunk beneath the upstart pedant's
frown,

Or all the sable glories of his gown;
Who, thus transplanted from his father's
school— 105

Unfit to govern, ignorant of rule—

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Succeeded him, whom all unite to praise,
 The dear preceptor of my early days!
 PROBUS, the pride of science, and the boast,
 To IDA now, alas! for ever lost, 110
 With him, for years, we search'd the classic
 page,
 And fear'd the master, though we loved
 the sage:
 Retired at last, his small yet peaceful seat
 From learning's labour is the blest retreat.
 POMPOSUS fills his magisterial chair; 115
 POMPOSUS governs,—but, my muse, for-
 bear:
 Contempt, in silence, be the pedant's lot;
 His name and precepts be alike forgot;
 No more his mention shall my verse de-
 grade,—
 To him my tribute is already paid. 120

High through those elms, with hoary
 branches crown'd,
 Fair IDA's bower adorns the landscape
 round;
 There Science, from her favour'd seat,
 surveys
 The vale where rural Nature claims her
 praise;
 To her awhile resigns her youthful train,
 Who move in joy, and dance along the
 plain; 126
 In scatter'd groups each favour'd haunt
 pursue,
 Repeat old pastimes, and discover new;
 Flush'd with his rays, beneath the noon-
 tide sun,
 In rival bands, between the wickets run,
 Drive o'er the sward the ball with active
 force, 131
 Or chase with nimble feet its rapid course.
 But these with slower steps direct their way,
 Where Brent's cool waves in limpid cur-
 rents stray;
 While yonder few search out some green
 retreat 135
 And arbours shade them from the summer
 heat:
 Others, again, a pert and lively crew,
 Some rough and thoughtless stranger
 placed in view,
 With frolic quaint their antic jests expose,
 And tease the grumbling rustic as he goes;
 Nor rest with this, but many a passing fray
 Tradition treasures for a future day: 142
 'Twas here the gather'd swains for
 vengeance fought,
 And here we earn'd the conquest dearly
 bought;
 Here have we fled before superior might,
 And here renew'd the wild tumultuous
 fight. 146
 While thus our souls with early passions
 swell,
 In lingering tones resounds the distant
 bell,

Th' allotted hour of daily sport is o'er,
 And Learning beckons from her temple's
 door. 150
 No splendid tablets grace her simple hall,
 But ruder records fill the dusky wall;
 There, deeply carved, behold! each tyro's
 name
 Secures its owner's academic fame;
 Here mingling view the names of sire and
 son— 155
 The one long graved, the other just begun:
 These shall survive alike when son and sire
 Beneath one common stroke of fate expire;
 Perhaps their last memorial these alone,
 Denied in death a monumental stone, 160
 Whilst to the gale in mournful cadence
 wave
 The sighing weeds that hide their nameless
 grave.
 And here my name, and many an early
 friend's,
 Along the wall in lengthen'd line extends.
 Though still our deeds amuse the youthful
 race, 165
 Who tread our steps, and fill our former
 place,
 Who young obey'd their lords in silent
 awe,
 Whose nod commanded, and whose voice
 was law;
 And now, in turn, possess the reins of
 power,
 To rule the little tyrants of an hour; 170
 Though sometimes, with the tales of
 ancient day,
 They pass the dreary winter's eve away—
 'And thus our former rulers stemm'd the
 tide,
 And thus they dealt the combat side by
 side;
 Just in this place the mouldering walls
 they scaled, 175
 Nor bolts nor bars against their strength
 avail'd;
 Here PROBUS came, the rising fray to
 quell,
 And here he falter'd forth his last fare-
 well;
 And here one night abroad they dared to
 roam,
 While bold POMPOSUS bravely stay'd at
 home; 180
 While thus they speak, the hour must soon
 arrive,
 When names of these, like ours, alone
 survive:
 Yet a few years, one general wreck will
 overwhelm
 The faint remembrance of our fairy realm.
 Dear honest race! though now we meet
 no more, 185
 One last long look on what we were
 before—

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Our first kind greetings, and our last
adieu—

Drew tears from eyes unused to weep with
you.

Through splendid circles, fashion's gaudy
world,

Where folly's glaring standard waves un-
furl'd, 190

I plunged to drown in noise my fond regret,
And all I sought or hoped was to forget.
Vain wish! if chance some well-remember'd
face,

Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend with honest
joy, 195

My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a
boy;

The glittering scene, the fluttering groups
around,

Were quite forgotten when my friend was
found;

The smiles of beauty—(for, alas! I've
known

What 'tis to bend before Love's mighty
throne)— 200

The smiles of beauty, though those smiles
were dear,

Could hardly charm me, when that friend
was near;

My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond sur-
prise,

The woods of IDA danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wand'ers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng;
Panting, again I traced her lofty grove,
And friendship's feelings triumph'd over
love. 208

Yet why should I alone with such de-
light

Retrace the circuit of my former flight?
Is there no cause beyond the common claim

Endear'd to all in childhood's very name?
Ah! sure some stronger impulse vibrates
here,

Which whispers friendship will be doubly
dear

To one who thus for kindred hearts must
room, 215

And seek abroad the love denied at home.
Those hearts, dear IDA, have I found in
thee—

A home, a world, a paradise to me.
Stern Death forbade my orphan youth to
share 219

The tender guidance of a father's care.
Can rank, or e'en a guardian's name supply

The love which glistens in a father's eye?
For this can wealth or title's sound atone,

Made, by a parent's early loss, my own?
What brother springs a brother's love to
seek? 225

What sister's gentle kiss has prest my
cheek?

For me how dull the vacant moments rise,
To no fond bosom link'd by kindred ties!
Oft in the progress of some fleeting dream
Fraternal smiles collected round me seem;
While still the visions to my heart are
prest, 231

The voice of love will murmur in my rest:
I hear—I wake—and in the sound rejoice;

I hear again,—but, ah! no brother's voice.
A hermit, 'midst of crowds, I fain must
stray 235

Alone, though thousand pilgrims fill the
way;

While these a thousand kindred wreaths
entwine,

I cannot call one single blossom mine:
What then remains? in solitude to groan,

To mix in friendship, or to sigh alone.
Thus must I cling to some endearing hand,
And none more dear than IDA's social
band.

Alonzo! best and dearest of my friends,
Thy name ennobles him who thus com-
mends;

From this fond tribute thou canst gain no
praise; 245

The praise is his who now that tribute pays.
Oh! in the promise of thy early youth,

If hope anticipate the words of truth,
Some loftier bard shall sing thy glorious
name, 249

To build his own upon thy deathless fame.
Friend of my heart, and foremost of the list

Of those with whom I lived supremely
blest,

Of have we drain'd the font of ancient
lore;

Though drinking deeply, thirsting still the
more.

Yet, when confinement's lingering hour
was done, 255

Our sports, our studies, and our souls were
one:

Together we impell'd the flying ball;
Together waited in our tutor's hall;

Together join'd in cricket's manly toil,
Or shared the produce of the river's spoil;

Or, plunging from the green declining
shore, 261

Our pliant limbs the buoyant billows bore;
In every element, unchanged, the same,

All, all that brothers should be, but the

Nor yet are you forgot, my jocund boy!
DAVUS, the harbinger of childish joy;

For ever foremost in the ranks of fun,
The laughing herald of the harmless pun;

Yet with a breast of such materials made—
Anxious to please, of pleasing half afraid;

Candid and liberal, with a heart of steel
In danger's path, though not untaught to
feel.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Still I remember, in the factious strife,
The rustic's musket aim'd against my life:
High pois'd in air the massy weapon
hung, 275
A cry of horror burst from every tongue;
Whilst I, in combat with another foe,
Fought on, unconscious of th' impending
blow;
Your arm, brave boy, arrested his career—
Forward you sprung, insensible to fear;
Disarm'd and baffled by your conquering
hand, 281
The grovelling savage roll'd upon the sand:
An act like this, can simple thanks repay?
Or all the labours of a grateful lay? 284
Oh no! when'er my breast forgets the deed,
That instant, DAVUS, it deserves to bleed.

LYCUS! on me thy claims are justly great:
Thy milder virtues could my muse relate,
To thee alone, unrivall'd, would belong
The feeble efforts of my lengthen'd song.
Well canst thou boast, to lead in senates
fit, 291
A Spartan firmness with Athenian wit:
Though yet in embryo these perfections
shine,
LYCUS! thy father's fame will soon be
thine.
Where learning nurtures the superior
mind, 295
What may we hope from genius thus re-
fin'd!
When time at length matures thy growing
years,
How will thou tower above thy fellow
peers!
Prudence and sense, a spirit bold and free,
With honour's soul, united beam in thee.

Shall fair EURYALUS pass by unsung?
From ancient lineage, not unworthy
sprung:
What though one sad dissension bade us
part?
That name is yet embalm'd within my heart;
Yet at the mention does that heart re-
bound, 305
And palpitate, responsive to the sound.
Envy dissolved our ties, and not our will:
We once were friends,—I'll think we are
so still.
A form unmatch'd in nature's partial
mould,
A heart untainted, we in thee behold:
Yet not the senate's thunder thou shalt
wield, 311
Nor seek for glory in the tented field;
To minds of ruder texture these be given—
Thy soul shall nearer soar its native
heaven.
Haply, in polish'd courts might be thy seat,
But that thy tongue could never forge
deceit: 316

The courtier's supple bow and sneering
smile,
The flow of compliment, the slippery
wile,
Would make that breast with indignation
burn,
And all the glittering snares to tempt thee
spurn. 320
Domestic happiness will stamp thy fate;
Sacred to love, unclouded e'er by hate;
The world admire thee, and thy friends
adore;
Ambition's slave alone would toil for
more. 324

Now last, but nearest of the social band,
See honest, open, generous CLEON stand;
With scarce one speck to cloud the pleas-
ing scene,
No vice degrades that purest soul serene.
On the same day our studious race begun,
On the same day our studious race was
run; 330
Thus side by side we pass'd our first career,
Thus side by side we strove for many a
year;
At last concluded our scholastic life,
We neither conquer'd in the classic strife:
As speakers each supports an equal name,
And crowds allow to both a partial fame:
To soothe a youthful rival's early pride,
Though Cleon's candour would the palm
divide,
Yet candour's self compels me now to own
Justice awards it to my friend alone. 340

Oh! friends regretted, scenes for ever
dear,
Remembrance hails you with her warmest
tear!
Drooping, she bends o'er pensive Fancy's
urn,
To trace the hours which never can return;
Yet with the retrospection loves to dwell,
And soothe the sorrows of her last fare-
well! 346
Yet greets the triumph of my boyish mind,
As infant laurels round my head were
twined,
When PROBUS' praise repaid my lyric song,
Or placed me higher in the studious
throng; 350
Or when my first harangue received
applause,
His sage instruction the primeval cause,
What gratitude to him my soul possest,
While hope of dawning honours fill'd my
breast!
For all my humble fame, to him alone
The praise is due, who made that fame my
own. 356
Oh! could I soar above these feeble lays,
These young effusions of my early days,

HOURS OF IDLENESS

To him my muse her noblest strain would give:

The song might perish, but the theme might live. ³⁶⁰

Yet why for him the needless verse essay?
His honour'd name requires no vain display:

By every son of grateful IDA blest,
It finds an echo in each youthful breast;
A fame beyond the glories of the proud,
Or all the plaudits of the venal crowd.

IDA! not yet exhausted is the theme,
Nor closed the progress of my youthful dream.

How many a friend deserves the grateful strain!

What scenes of childhood still unsung remain! ³⁷⁰

Yet let me hush this echo of the past,
This parting song, the dearest and the last;
And brood in secret o'er those hours of joy,

To me a silent and a sweet employ, ³⁷⁴
While future hope and fear alike unknown,
I think with pleasure on the past alone;
Yes, to the past alone my heart confine,
And chase the phantom of what once was mine.

IDA! still o'er thy hills in joy preside,
And proudly steer through time's eventful tide; ³⁸⁰

Still may thy blooming sons thy name revere,

Smile in thy bower, but quit thee with a tear,—

That tear, perhaps, the fondest which will flow,

O'er their last scene of happiness below. ³⁸⁴

Tell me, ye hoary few, who glide along,
The feeble veterans of some former throng,
Whose friends, like autumn leaves by tempests whirl'd,

Are swept for ever from this busy world;
Revolve the fleeting moments of your youth,

While Care has yet withheld her venom'd tooth; ³⁹⁰

Say if remembrance days like these endears
Beyond the rapture of succeeding years?
Say, can ambition's fever'd dream bestow
So sweet a balm to soothe your hours of woe?

Can treasures, hoarded for some thankless son, ³⁹⁵

Can royal smiles, or wreaths by slaughter won,

Can stars or ermine, man's maturer toys
(For glittering baubles are not left to boys),
Recall one scene so much beloved to view,
As those where Youth her garland twined for you? ⁴⁰⁰

Ah, no! amidst the gloomy calm of age
You turn with faltering hand life's varied page;

Peruse the record of your days on earth,
Unsullied only where it marks your birth;
Still lingering pause above each chequer'd leaf, ⁴⁰⁵

And blot with tears the sable lines of grief;
Where Passion o'er the theme her mantle threw,

Or weeping Virtue sigh'd a faint adieu;
But bless the scroll which fairer words adorn,

Traced by the rosy finger of the morn;
When Friendship bow'd before the shrine of Truth, ⁴¹¹

And Love, without his pinion, smiled on Youth.

ANSWER TO A BEAUTIFUL POEM

ENTITLED 'THE COMMON LOT'

MONTGOMERY! true, the common lot
Of mortals lies in Lethe's wave;
Yet some shall never be forgot,
Some shall exist beyond the grave.

'Unknown the region of his birth,' ⁵
The hero rolls the tide of war;
Yet not unknown his martial worth,
Which glares a meteor from afar.

His joy or grief, his weal or woe,
Perchance may 'scape the page of fame;
Yet nations now unborn will know ¹¹
The record of his deathless name.

The patriot's and the poet's frame
Must share the common tomb of all:
Their glory will not sleep the same; ¹⁵
That will arise, though empires fall.

The lustre of a beauty's eye
Assumes the ghastly state of death;
The fair, the brave, the good must die,
And sink the yawning grave beneath.

Once more the speaking eye revives, ²¹
Still beaming through the lover's strain;
For Petrarch's Laura still survives:
She died, but ne'er will die again.

The rolling seasons pass away, ²⁵
And Time, untiring, waves his wing;
Whilst honour's laurels ne'er decay,
But bloom in fresh, unfading spring.

All, all must sleep in grim repose,
Collected in the silent tomb; ³⁰
The old and young, with friends and foes,
Fest'ring alike in shrouds, consume.

The mouldering marble lasts its day,
Yet falls at length an useless fane;
To ruin's ruthless fangs a prey, ³⁵
The wrecks of pillar'd pride remain.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

What, though the sculpture be destroy'd,
From dark oblivion meant to guard;
A bright renown shall be enjoy'd
By those whose virtues claim reward.

Then do not say the common lot 41
Of all lies deep in Lethe's wave;
Some few who ne'er will be forgot
Shall burst the bondage of the grave.
1806.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH THE
VELVET BAND WHICH BOUND HER TRESSES
THIS Band, which bound thy yellow hair,
Is mine, sweet girl! thy pledge of love;
It claims my warmest, dearest care,
Like relics left of saints above.

Oh! I will wear it next my heart; 5
'Twill bind my soul in bonds to thee:
From me again 'twill ne'er depart,
But mingle in the grave with me.

The dew I gather from thy lip
Is not so dear to me as this; 10
That I but for a moment sip,
And banquet on a transient bliss:

This will recall each youthful scene,
E'en when our lives are on the wane;
The leaves of Love will still be green 15
When Memory bids them bud again.

Oh! little lock of golden hue,
In gently waving ringlet curl'd,
By the dear head on which you grew,
I would not lose you for a world. 20

Not though a thousand more adorn
The polish'd brow where once you shone,
Like rays which gild a cloudless morn,
Beneath Columbia's fervid zone.

1806. [First published, 1832.]

LINES

ADDRESSED TO THE REV. J. T. BECHER, ON
HIS ADVISING THE AUTHOR TO MIX MORE
WITH SOCIETY

DEAR Becher, you tell me to mix with man-
kind;
I cannot deny such a precept is wise;
But retirement accords with the tone of my
mind:
I will not descend to a world I despise.

Did the senate or camp my exertions re-
quire, 5
Ambition might prompt me, at once, to
go forth;
When infancy's years of probation expire,
Perchance I may strive to distinguish
my birth.

The fire in the cavern of Etna conceal'd
Still mantles unseen in its secret recess;
At length, in a volume terrific reveal'd,
No torrent can quench it, no bounds
can repress. 12

Oh! thus, the desire in my bosom for fame
Bids me live but to hope for posterity's
praise.
Could I soar with the phoenix on pinions
of flame, 15
With him I would wish to expire in the
blaze.

For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the
death,
What censure, what danger, what woe
would I brave!
Their lives did not end when they yielded
their breath;
Their glory illumines the gloom of
their grave. 20

Yet why should I mingle in Fashion's full
herd?
Why crouch to her leaders, or cringe to
her rules?
Why bend to the proud, or applaud the
absurd?
Why search for delight in the friendship
of fools?

I have tasted the sweets and the bitters of
love; 25
In friendship I early was taught to
believe;
My passion the matrons of prudence reprove;
I have found that a friend may profess,
yet deceive.

To me what is wealth?—it may pass in an
hour,
If tyrants prevail, or if Fortune should
frown: 30
To me what is title?—the phantom of
power;
To me what is fashion?—I seek but re-
nown.

Deceit is a stranger as yet to my soul:
I still am unpractised to varnish the
truth:
Then why should I live in a hateful con-
trol? 35
Why waste upon folly the days of my
youth?

1806.

REMEMBRANCE

'Tis done!—I saw it in my dreams;
No more with Hope the future beams;
My days of happiness are few:
Chill'd by misfortune's wintry blast,
My dawn of life is overcast; 5
Love, Hope, and Joy, alike adieu!
Would I could add Remembrance too?
1806. [First published, 1832.]

HOURS OF IDLENESS

THE DEATH OF CALMAR AND ORLA

AN IMITATION OF MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

DEAR are the days of youth! Age dwells on their remembrance through the mist of time. In the twilight he recalls the sunny hours of morn. He lifts his spear with trembling hand. 'Not thus feebly did I raise the steel before my fathers!' Past is the race of heroes. But their fame rises on the harp; their souls ride on the wings of the wind; they hear the sound through the sighs of the storm, and rejoice in their hall of clouds! Such is Calmar. The gray stone marks his narrow house. He looks down from eddying tempests: he rolls his form in the whirlwind, and hovers on the blast of the mountain.

In Morven dwelt the chief; a beam of war to Fingal. His steps in the field were marked in blood. Lochlin's sons had fled before his angry spear; but mild was the eye of Calmar; soft was the flow of his yellow locks; they streamed like the meteor of the night. No maid was the sigh of his soul: his thoughts were given to friendship,—to dark-haired Orla, destroyer of heroes! Equal were their swords in battle; but fierce was the pride of Orla:—gentle alone to Calmar. Together they dwelt in the cave of Oithona.

From Lochlin, Swaran bounded o'er the blue waves. Erin's sons fell beneath his might. Fingal roused his chiefs to combat. Their ships cover the ocean. Their hosts throng on the green hills. They come to the aid of Erin.

Night rose in clouds. Darkness veils the armies: but the blazing oaks gleam through the valley. The sons of Lochlin slept: their dreams were of blood. They lift the spear in thought, and Fingal flies. Not so the host of Morven. To watch was the post of Orla. Calmar stood by his side. Their spears were in their hands. Fingal called his chiefs: they stood around. The king was in the midst. Gray were his locks, but strong was the arm of the king. Age withered not his powers. 'Sons of Morven,' said the hero, 'to-morrow we meet the foe. But where is Cuthullin, the shield of Erin? He rests in the halls of Tura; he knows not of our coming. Who will speed through Lochlin to the hero, and call the chief to arms? The path is by the swords of foes; but many are my heroes. They are thunderbolts of war. Speak, ye chiefs! Who will arise?'

'Son of Trenmor! mine be the deed,' said dark-haired Orla, 'and mine alone. What is death to me? I love the sleep of the mighty, but little is the danger. The
is of Lochlin dream. I will seek car-

borne Cuthullin. If I fall, raise the song of bards; and lay me by the stream of Lubar.' —'And shalt thou fall alone?' said fair-haired Calmar. 'Wilt thou leave thy friend afar? Chief of Oithona! not feeble is my arm in fight. Could I see thee die, and not lift the spear? No, Orla! ours has been the chase of the roebuck, and the feast of shells; ours be the path of danger: ours has been the cave of Oithona; ours be the narrow dwelling on the banks of Lubar.' 'Calmar,' said the chief of Oithona, 'why should thy yellow locks be darkened in the dust of Erin? Let me fall alone. My father dwells in his hall of air: he will rejoice in his boy; but the blue-eyed Mora spreads the feast for her son in Morven. She listens to the steps of the hunter on the heath, and thinks it is the tread of Calmar. Let her not say, "Calmar has fallen by the steel of Lochlin: he died with gloomy Orla, the chief of the dark brow." Why should tears dim the azure eye of Mora? Why should her voice curse Orla, the destroyer of Calmar? Live, Calmar! Live to raise my stone of moss; live to revenge me in the blood of Lochlin. Join the song of bards above my grave. Sweet will be the song of death to Orla, from the voice of Calmar. My ghost shall smile on the notes of praise.' 'Orla,' said the son of Mora, 'could I raise the song of death to my friend? Could I give his fame to the winds? No, my heart would speak in sighs: faint and broken are the sounds of sorrow. Orla! our souls shall hear the song together. One cloud shall be ours on high: the bards will mingle the names of Orla and Calmar.'

They quit the circle of the chiefs. Their steps are to the host of Lochlin. The dying blaze of oak dim twinkles through the night. The northern star points the path to Tura. Swaran, the king, rests on his lonely hill. Here the troops are mixed: they frown in sleep; their shields beneath their heads. Their swords gleam at distance in heaps. The fires are faint; their embers fall in smoke. All is hushed; but the gale sighs on the rocks above. Lightly wheel the heroes through the slumbering band. Half the journey is past, when Mathon, resting on his shield, meets the eye of Orla. It rolls in flame, and glistens through the shade. His spear is raised on high. 'Why dost thou bend thy brow, chief of Oithona?' said fair-haired Calmar: 'we are in the midst of foes. Is this a time for delay?' 'It is a time for vengeance,' said Orla of the gloomy brow. 'Mathon of Lochlin sleeps: seest thou his spear? Its point is dim with the gore of my father. The blood of Mathon shall reek on mine; but shall I slay him sleeping, son of Mora?'

HOURS OF IDLENESS

No! he shall feel his wound: my fame shall not soar on the blood of slumber. Rise, Mathon, rise! The son of Conna calls; thy life is his; rise to combat.' Mathon starts from sleep; but did he rise alone? No: the gathering chiefs bound on the plain. 'Fly! Calmar, fly!' said dark-haired Orla. 'Mathon is mine. I shall die in joy; but Lochlin crowds around. Fly through the shade of night.' Orla turns. The helm of Mathon is cleft; his shield falls from his arm: he shudders in his blood. He rolls by the side of the blazing oak. Strumon sees him fall: his wrath rises: his weapon glitters on the head of Orla: but a spear pierced his eye. His brain gushes through the wound, and foams on the spear of Calmar. As roll the waves of the Ocean on two mighty barks of the north, so pour the men of Lochlin on the chiefs. As, breaking the surge in foam, proudly steer the barks of the north, so rise the chiefs of Morven on the scattered crests of Lochlin. The din of arms came to the ear of Fingal. He strikes his shield; his sons throng around; the people pour along the heath. Ryno bounds in joy. Ossian stalks in his arms. Oscar shakes the spear. The eagle wing of Fillan floats on the wind. Dreadful is the clang of death! many are the widows of Lochlin! Morven prevails in its strength.

Morn glimmers on the hills: no living foe is seen; but the sleepers are many; grim they lie on Erin. The breeze of ocean lifts their locks; yet they do not awake. The hawks scream above their prey.

Whose yellow locks wave o'er the breast of a chief? Bright as the gold of the stranger, they mingle with the dark hair of his friend. 'Tis Calmar: he lies on the bosom of Orla. Theirs is one stream of blood. Fierce is the look of the gloomy Orla. He breathes not; but his eye is still a flame. It glazes in death unclosed. His hand is grasped in Calmar's; but Calmar lives! he lives, though low. 'Rise,' said the king, 'rise, son of Mora: 'tis mine to heal the wounds of heroes. Calmar may yet bound on the hills of Morven.'

'Never more shall Calmar chase the deer of Morven with Orla,' said the hero. 'What were the chase to me alone? Who should share the spoils of battle with Calmar? Orla is at rest! Rough was thy soul, Orla! yet soft to me as the dew of morn. It glared on others in lightning: to me a silver beam of night. Bear my sword to blue-eyed Mora; let it hang in my empty hall. It is not pure from blood: but it could not save Orla. Lay me with my friend. Raise the song when I am dark!'

They are laid by the stream of Lubar. Four gray stones mark the dwelling of Orla

and Calmar. When Swaran was bound, our sails rose on the blue waves. The winds gave our barks to Morven:—the bards raised the song.

'What form rises on the roar of clouds? Whose dark ghost gleams on the red streams of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder. 'Tis Orla, the brown chief of Oithona. He was unmatched in war. Peace to thy soul, Orla! thy fame will not perish. Nor thine, Calmar! Lovely wast thou, son of blue-eyed Mora; but not harmless was thy sword. It hangs in thy cave. The ghosts of Lochlin shriek around its steel. Hear thy praise, Calmar! It dwells on the voice of the mighty. Thy name shakes on the echoes of Morven. Then raise thy fair locks, son of Mora. Spread them on the arch of the rainbow; and smile through the tears of the storm.'

L'AMITIÉ EST L'AMOUR SANS AILES

WHY should my anxious breast repine,
Because my youth is fled?
Days of delight may still be mine;
Affection is not dead.

In tracing back the years of youth, 5
One firm record, one lasting truth,
Celestial consolation brings;
Bear it, ye breezes, to the seat,
Where first my heart responsive beat,—
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Through few, but deeply chequer'd years,
What moments have been mine! 12
Now half obscured by clouds of tears,
Now bright in rays divine;
Howe'er my future doom be cast, 15
My soul, enraptured with the past,
To one idea fondly clings;
Friendship! that thought is all thine own,
Worth worlds of bliss, that thought alone—
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Where yonder yew-trees lightly wave 21
Their branches on the gale,
Unheeded heaves a simple grave,
Which tells the common tale;
Round this unconscious schoolboys stray,
Till the dull knell of childish play 26
From yonder studious mansion rings;
But here where'er my footsteps move,
My silent tears too . . . prove
'Friendship is Love wit out his wings!'

Oh, Love! before thy glowing shrine 31
My early vows were paid;
My hopes, my dreams, my heart was thine,
But these are now decay'd;
For thine are pinions like the wind, 35
No trace of thee remains behind,

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Except, alas! thy jealous stings.
Away, away! delusive power,
Thou shalt not haunt my coming hour;
Unless, indeed, without thy wings. 40

Seat of my youth! thy distant spire
Recalls each scene of joy;
My bosom glows with former fire,—
In mind again a boy.
Thy grove of elms, thy verdant hill, 45
Thy every path delights me still,
Each flower a double fragrance flings;
Again, as once, in converse gay,
Each dear associate seems to say,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

My Lycus! wherefore dost thou weep?
Thy falling tears restrain; 52
Affection for a time may sleep,
But, oh, 'twill wake again.
Think, think, my friend, when next we
meet, 55
Our long-wish'd interview, how sweet!
From this my hope of rapture springs;
While youthful hearts thus fondly swell,
Absence, my friend, can only tell,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

In one, and one alone deceived, 61
Did I my error mourn?
No—from oppressive bonds relieved,
I left the wretch to scorn.
I turn'd to those my childhood knew,
With feelings warm, with bosoms true,
Twined with my heart's according
strings;
And till those vital chords shall break,
For none but these my breast shall wake
Friendship, the power deprived of 70
wings!

Ye few! my soul, my life is yours,
My memory and my hope;
Your worth a lasting love insures,
Unfetter'd in its scope; 74
From smooth deceit and terror sprung
With aspect fair and honey'd tongue,
Let Adulation wait on kings;
With joy elate, by snares beset,
We, we, my friends, can ne'er forget
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Fictions and dreams inspire the bard 81
Who rolls the epic song;
Friendship and truth be my reward—
To me no bays belong;
If laurel'd Fame but dwells with lies, 85
Me the enchantress ever flies,
Whose heart and not whose fancy sings;
Simple and young, I dare not feign;
Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain, 89
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

December 1806.
[First published, 1832.]

THE PRAYER OF NATURE

FATHER of Light! great God of Heaven!
Hear'st thou the accents of despair?
Can guilt like man's be e'er forgiven?
Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?

Father of Light, on thee I call! 5
Thou seest my soul is dark within;
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert from me the death of sin.

No shrine I seek, to sects unknown;
Oh, point to me the path of truth! 10
Thy dread omnipotence I own;
Spare, yet amend, the faults of youth.

Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
Let superstition hail the pile, 14
Let priests, to spread their sable reign,
With tales of mystic rites beguile.

Shall man confine his Maker's sway
To Gothic domes of mouldering stone?
Thy temple is the face of day;
Earth, ocean, heaven, thy boundless 20
throne.

Shall man condemn his race to hell,
Unless they bend in pompous form?
Tell us that all, for one who fell,
Must perish in the mingling storm?

Shall each pretend to reach the skies, 25
Yet doom his brother to expire,
Whose soul a different hope supplies,
Or doctrines less severe inspire?

Shall these, by creeds they can't expound,
Prepare a fancied bliss or woe? 30
Shall reptiles, grovelling on the ground,
Their great Creator's purpose know?

Shall those, who live for self alone,
Whose years float on in daily crime—
Shall they by Faith for guilt atone, 35
And live beyond the bounds of Time?

Father! no prophet's laws I seek,—
Thy laws in Nature's works appear;—
I own myself corrupt and weak,
Yet will I pray, for thou wilt hear! 40

Thou, who canst guide the wandering star
Through trackless realms of æther's
space;
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose hand from pole to pole I trace:

Thou, who in wisdom placed me here,
Who, when thou wilt, canst take me
hence, 46

Ah! whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me thy wide defence.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

To Thee, my God, to thee I call!
 Whatever weal or woe betide,
 By thy command I rise or fall,
 In thy protection I confide.

If, when this dust to dust's restored,
 My soul shall float on airy wing,
 How shall thy glorious name adored
 Inspire her feeble voice to sing!

But, if this fleeting spirit share
 With clay the grave's eternal bed,
 While life yet throbs I raise my prayer,
 Though doom'd no more to quit the
 dead.

To Thee I breathe my humble strain,
 Grateful for all thy mercies past,
 And hope, my God, to thee again
 This erring life may fly at last.

December 29, 1806.
 [First published, 1830.]

TO EDWARD NOEL LONG, ESQ.

'Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.'—HOR.

DEAR LONG, in this sequester'd scene,
 While all around in slumber lie,
 The joyous days which ours have been
 Come rolling fresh on Fancy's eye;
 Thus if amidst the gathering storm,
 While clouds the darken'd noon deform,
 Yon heaven assumes a varied glow,
 I hail the sky's celestial bow,
 Which spreads the sign of future peace,
 And bids the war of tempests cease.
 Ah! though the present brings but pain
 I think those days may come again;
 Or if, in melancholy mood,
 Some lurking envious fear intrude,
 To check my bosom's fondest thought,
 And interrupt the golden dream,
 I crush the fiend with malice fraught,
 And still indulge my wonted theme.
 Although we ne'er again can trace,
 In Granta's vale, the pedant's lore;
 Nor through the groves of Ida chase
 Our raptured visions as before,
 Though Youth has flown on rosy pinion,
 And Manhood claims his stern dominion,
 Age will not every hope destroy,
 But yield some hours of sober joy.

Yes, I will hope that Time's broad wing
 Will shed around some dews of spring:
 But if his scythe must sweep the flowers
 Which bloom among the fairy bowers,
 Where smiling youth delights to dwell,
 And hearts with early rapture swell;
 If frowning Age, with cold control,
 Confines the current of the soul,
 Congeals the tear of Pity's eye,
 Or checks the sympathetic sigh,
 Or hears unmoved misfortune's groan,
 And bids me feel for self alone;

Oh! may my bosom never learn
 To soothe its wonted heedless flow,
 Still, still despise the censor stern,
 But ne'er forget another's woe.
 Yes, as you knew me in the days
 O'er which Remembrance yet delays,
 Still may I rove, untutor'd, wild,
 And even in age at heart a child.

Though now on airy visions borne,
 To you my soul is still the same.
 Oft has it been my fate to mourn,
 And all my former joys are tame.
 But, hence! ye hours of sable hue!
 Your frowns are gone, my sorrows o'er:
 By every bliss my childhood knew,
 I'll think upon your shade no more.
 Thus, when the whirlwind's rage is past,
 And caves their sullen roar enclose,
 We heed no more the wintry blast,
 When lull'd by zephyr to repose.

Full often has my infant Muse
 Attuned to love her languid lyre;
 But now, without a theme to choose,
 The strains in stolen sighs expire.
 My youthful nymphs, alas! are flown;
 E—— is a wife, and C—— a mother,
 And Carolina sighs alone,
 And Mary's given to another;
 And Cora's eye, which roll'd on me,
 Can now no more my love recall:
 In truth, dear LONG, 'twas time to flee;
 For Cora's eye will shine on all.

And though the sun, with genial rays,
 His beams alike to all displays,
 And every lady's eye's a *sun*,
 These last should be confined to one.
 The soul's meridian don't become her,
 Whose sun displays a general *summer*!
 Thus faint is every former flame,
 And passion's self is now a name.
 As, when the ebbing flames are low,
 The aid which once improved their
 light,
 And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
 Now quenches all their sparks in night;
 Thus has it been with passion's fires,
 As many a boy and girl remembers,
 While all the force of love expires,
 Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

But now, dear LONG, 'tis midnight's
 noon,
 And clouds obscure the watery moon,
 Whose beauties I shall not rehearse,
 Described in every stripling's verse;
 For why should I the path go o'er,
 Which every bard has trod before?
 Yet ere yon silver lamp of night
 Has thrice perform'd her stated round,
 Has thrice retraced her path of light,
 And chased away the gloom profound,

HOURS OF IDLENESS

I trust that we, my gentle friend,
 Shall see her rolling orbit wend
 Above the dear-loved peaceful seat,
 Which once contain'd our youth's re-
 treat; 100
 And then with those our childhood knew
 We'll mingle in the festive crew;
 While many a tale of former day
 Shall wing the laughing hours away;
 And all the flow of souls shall pour 105
 The sacred intellectual shower,
 Nor cease till Luna's waning horn
 Scarce glimmers through the mist of
 morn.

TO A LADY

Oh! had my fate been join'd with thine,
 As once this pledge appear'd a token,
 These follies had not then been mine,
 For then my peace had not been broken.

To thee these early faults I owe, 5
 To thee, the wise and old reproving:
 They know my sins, but do not know
 'Twas thine to break the bonds of
 loving.

For once my soul, like thine, was pure,
 And all its rising fires could smother;
 But now thy vows no more endure, 11
 Bestow'd by thee upon another;

Perhaps his peace I could destroy,
 And spoil the blisses that await him;
 Yet let my rival smile in joy, 15
 For thy dear sake I cannot hate him.

Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
 My heart no more can rest with any;
 But what it sought in thee alone, 20
 Attempts, alas! to find in many.

Then fare thee well, deceitful maid!
 'Twere vain and fruitless to regret thee;
 Nor hope nor memory yield their aid,
 But pride may teach me to forget thee.

Yet all this giddy waste of years, 25
 This tiresome round of palling pleasures;
 These varied loves, these matron's fears,
 These thoughtless strains to passion's
 measures—

If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd:—
 This cheek, now pale from early riot,
 With passion's hectic ne'er had flushed,
 But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

Yes, once the rural scene was sweet, 33
 For Nature seem'd to smile before thee;
 And once my breast abhor'd deceit,—
 For then it beat but to adore thee.

But now I seek for other joys: 37
 To think would drive my soul to mad-

In thoughtless throngs and empty noise
 I conquer half my bosom's sadness.

Yet, even in these a thought will steal
 In spite of every vain endeavour,—
 And fiends might pity what I feel,—
 To know that thou art lost for ever.

I WOULD I WERE A CARELESS CHILD

I WOULD I were a careless child,
 Still dwelling in my Highland cave,
 Or roaming through the dusky wild,
 Or bounding o'er the dark blue wave;
 The cumbrous pomp of Saxon pride 5
 Accords not with the freeborn soul,
 Which loves the mountain's craggy side,
 And seeks the rocks where billows
 roll.

Fortune! take back these cultured lands,
 Take back this name of splendid sound!
 I hate the touch of servile hands, 11
 I hate the slaves that cringe around.
 Place me among the rocks I love,
 Which sound to Ocean's wildest roar;
 I ask but this—again to rove 15
 Through scenes my youth hath known
 before.

Few are my years, and yet I feel
 The world was ne'er design'd for me:
 Ah! why do dark'ning shades conceal
 The hour when man must cease to be?
 Once I beheld a splendid dream, 21
 A visionary scene of bliss:
 Truth!—wherefore did thy hated beam
 Awake me to a world like this?

I loved—but those I loved are gone; 25
 Had friends—my early friends are fled:
 How cheerless feels the heart alone,
 When all its former hopes are dead!
 Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill; 30
 Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
 The heart—the heart—is lonely still.

How dull! to hear the voice of those
 Whom rank or chance, whom wealth or
 power,
 Have made, though neither friends nor
 foes, 35
 Associates of the festive hour.
 Give me again a faithful few,
 In years and feelings still the same,
 And I will fly the midnight crew, 39
 Where boist'rous joy is but a name.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

And woman, lovely woman! thou,
 My hope, my comforter, my all!
 How cold must be my bosom now,
 When e'en thy smiles begin to pall!
 Without a sigh would I resign
 This busy scene of splendid woe, 45
 To make that calm contentment mine,
 Which virtue knows, or seems to know.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men—
 I seek to shun, not hate mankind; 50
 My breast requires the sullen glen,
 Whose gloom may suit a darken'd mind.

Oh! that to me the wings were given
 Which bear the turtle to her nest!
 Then would I cleave the vault of heaven, 55
 To flee away, and be at rest.

WHEN I ROVED A YOUNG HIGHLANDER

WHEN I roved a young Highlander o'er
 the dark heath,
 And climb'd thy steep summit, oh
 Morven of snow!
 To gaze on the torrent that thunder'd
 beneath,
 Or the mist of the tempest that gather'd
 below, 4
 Untutor'd by science, a stranger to fear,
 And rude as the rocks where my infancy grew,
 No feeling, save one, to my bosom was
 dear;
 Need I say, my sweet Mary, 'twas
 centred in you?

Yet it could not be love, for I knew not
 the name,—
 What passion can dwell in the heart of
 a child? 10
 But still I perceive an emotion the same
 As I felt, when a boy, on the crag-
 cover'd wild:
 One image alone on my bosom impress'd,
 I loved my bleak regions, nor panted
 for new;
 And few were my wants, for my wishes
 were bless'd; 15
 And pure were my thoughts, for my
 soul was with you.

I arose with the dawn; with my dog as my
 guide,
 From mountain to mountain I bounded
 along;
 I breasted the billows of Dee's rushing
 tide,
 And heard at a distance the High-
 lander's song: 20

At eve, on my heath-cover'd couch of re-
 pose,
 No dreams, save of Mary, were spread
 to my view;
 And warm to the skies my devotions arose,
 For the first of my prayers was a bless-
 ing on you.

I left my bleak home, and my visions are
 gone; 25
 The mountains are vanish'd, my youth
 is no more;
 As the last of my race, I must wither alone,
 And delight but in days I have wit-
 ness'd before:
 Ah! splendour has raised but embitter'd
 my lot;
 More dear were the scenes which my
 infancy knew: 30
 Though my hopes may have fail'd, yet
 they are not forgot;
 Though cold is my heart, still it lingers
 with you.

When I see some dark hill point its crest
 to the sky,
 I think of the rocks that o'ershadow
 Colbleen;
 When I see the soft blue of a love-speaking
 eye, 35
 I think of those eyes that endear'd the
 rude scene;
 When, haply, some light-waving locks I
 behold,
 That faintly resemble my Mary's in hue,
 I think on the long, flowing ringlets of
 gold,
 The locks that were sacred to beauty,
 and you. 40

Yet the day may arrive when the moun-
 tains once more
 Shall rise to my sight in their mantles of
 snow:
 But while these soar above me, unchanged
 as before,
 Will Mary be there to receive me?—ah,
 no!
 Adieu, then, ye hills, where my childhood
 was bred! 45
 Thou sweet flowing Dee, to thy waters
 adieu!
 No home in the forest shall shelter my
 head,—
 Ah! Mary, what home could be mine but
 with you?

TO GEORGE, EARL DELAWARR

Oh! yes, I will own we were dear to each
 other;
 The friendships of childhood, though
 fleeting, are true;
 The love which you felt was the love of a
 brother,
 Nor less the affection I cherish'd for you.

HOURS OF IDLENESS

And yet, while Beauty's praise is thine,
Harmonious favourite of the Nine! 50

Repine not at thy lot.
Thy soothing lays may still be read,
When Persecution's arm is dead,
And critics are forgot.

Still I must yield those worthies merit, 55
Who chasten, with unsparing spirit.

Bad rhymes, and those who write them;
And though myself may be the next
By criticism to be vexed,

I really will not fight them. 60

Perhaps they would do quite as well
To break the rudely sounding shell

Of such a young beginner:
He who offends at pert nineteen,
Ere thirty may become, I ween,
A very harden'd sinner. 65

Now, Clare, I must return to you;
And, sure, apologies are due:
Accept, then, my concession.
In truth, dear Clare, in fancy's flight
I soar along from left to right;
My muse admires digression. 70

I think I said 'twould be your fate
To add one star to royal state;—
May regal smiles attend you!
And should a noble monarch reign,
You will not seek his smiles in vain,
If worth can recommend you. 75

Yet since in danger courts abound,
Where specious rivals glitter round, 80
From snares may saints preserve you;
And grant your love or friendship ne'er
From any claim a kindred care,
But those who best deserve you!

Not for a moment may you stray
From truth's secure, unerring way!
May no delights decoy!
O'er roses may your footsteps move,
Your smiles be ever smiles of love,
Your tears be tears of joy! 85

Oh! if you wish that happiness
Your coming days and years may bless,
And virtues crown your brow;
Be still as you were wont to be,
Spotless as you've been known to me,—
Be still as you are now. 96

And though some trifling share of praise,
To cheer my last declining days,
To me were doubly dear;
Whilst blessing your beloved name 100
I'd waive at once a poet's fame,
To prove a prophet here.

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH AN ELM IN THE CHURCHYARD OF HARROW

Spot of my youth! whose hoary branches
sigh,

Swept by the breeze that fans thy cloud-
less sky;

Where now alone I muse, who oft have trod,
With those I loved, thy soft and verdant sod;
With those who, scatter'd far, perchance
deplore, 5

Like me, the happy scenes they knew be-
fore:

Oh! as I trace again thy winding hill,
Mine eyes admire, my heart adores thee
still,

Thou drooping Elm! beneath whose
boughs I lay, 65

And frequent mused the twilight hours
away; 10

Where, as they once were wont, my limbs
recline,

But, ah! without the thoughts which then
were mine: 70

How do thy branches, moaning to the blast,
Invite the bosom to recall the past,
And seem to whisper, as they gently swell,
'Take, while thou canst, a lingering, last
farewell!' 16

When fate shall chill, at length, this
fever'd breast,
And calm its cares and passions into rest,
Oft have I thought, 'twould soothe my
dying hour,— 75

If aught may soothe when life resigns her
power,— 20

To know some humble grave, some nar-
row cell,

Would hide my bosom where it loved to
dwell;

With this fond dream, methinks 'twere
sweet to die— 85

And here it linger'd, here my heart might
lie;

Here might I sleep where all my hopes
arose, 25

Scene of my youth, and couch of my re-
pose; 90

For ever stretch'd beneath this mantling
shade,

Press'd by the turf where once my child-
hood play'd;

Wrapt by the soil that veils the spot I loved,
Mix'd with the earth o'er which my foot-
steps moved; 30

Blest by the tongues that charm'd my
youthful ear,

Mourn'd by the few my soul acknow-
ledged here;

Deplored by those in early days allied,
And unremember'd by the world beside.

September 2, 1807.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

1807—1824

THE ADIEU

WRITTEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE
AUTHOR WOULD SOON DIE

ADIEU, thou Hill! where early joy
Spread roses o'er my brow;
Where Science seeks each loitering boy
With knowledge to endow.
Adieu, my youthful friends or foes,
Partners of former bliss or woes;
No more through Ida's paths we stray;
Soon must I share the gloomy cell,
Whose ever-slumbering inmates dwell
Unconscious of the day.

Adieu, ye hoary Regal Fanes,
Ye spires of Granta's vale,
Where Learning robed in sable reigns,
And Melancholy pale.
Ye comrades of the jovial hour,
Ye tenants of the classic bower,
On Cama's verdant margin placed,
Adieu! while memory still is mine,
For, offerings on Oblivion's shrine,
These scenes must be effaced.

Adieu, ye mountains of the clime
Where grew my youthful years;
Where Loch na Garr in snows sublime
His giant summit rears.
Why did my childhood wander forth
From you, ye regions of the North,
With sons of pride to roam?
Why did I quit my Highland cave,
Mar's dusky heath, and Dee's clear wave,
To seek a Sotheron home!

Hall of my Sires! a long farewell—
Yet why to thee adieu?
Thy vaults will echo back my knell,
Thy towers my tomb will view:
The faltering tongue which sung thy fall,
And former glories of thy Hall,
Forgets its wonted simple note—
But yet the Lyre retains the strings,
And sometimes, on Æolian wings,
In dying strains may float.

Fields, which surround yon rustic cot,
While yet I linger here,
Adieu! you are not now forgot,
To retrospection dear.
Streamlet! along whose rippling surge
My youthful limbs were wont to urge,
At noontide heat, their pliant course;
Plunging with ardour from the shore,
Thy springs will lave these limbs no more,
Deprived of active force.

And shall I here forget the scene,
Still nearest to my breast?
Rocks rise and rivers roll between
The spot which passion blest;
Yet, Mary, all thy beauties seem
Fresh as in Love's bewitching dream,
To me in smiles display'd;
Till slow disease resigns his prey
To Death, the parent of decay,
Thine image cannot fade.

And thou, my Friend! whose gentle love
Yet thrills my bosom's chords,
How much thy friendship was above
Description's power of words!
Still near my breast thy gift I wear
Which sparkled once with Feeling's tear,
Of Love the pure, the sacred gem;
Our souls were equal, and our lot
In that dear moment quite forgot;
Let Pride alone condemn!

All, all is dark and cheerless now!
No smile of Love's deceit
Can warm my veins with wonted glow,
Can bid Life's pulses beat:
Not e'en the hope of future fame
Can wake my faint, exhausted frame,
Or crown with fancied wreaths my
head.
Mine is a short inglorious race,—
To humble in the dust my face,
And mingle with the dead.

Oh Fame! thou goddess of my heart;
On him who gains thy praise,
Pointless must fall the Spectre's dart,
Consumed in Glory's blaze;
But me she beckons from the earth,
My name obscure, unmark'd my birth,
My life a short and vulgar dream:
Lost in the dull, ignoble crowd,
My hopes recline within a shroud,
My fate is Lethe's stream.

When I repose beneath the sod,
Unheeded in the clay,
Where once my playful footsteps trod,
Where now my head must lay,
The meed of Pity will be shed
In dew-drops o'er my narrow bed,
By nightly skies, and storms alone;
No mortal eye will deign to steep
With tears the dark sepulchral deep
Which hides a name unknown.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Forget this world, my restless sprite,
Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heaven:
There must thou soon direct thy flight,
If errors are forgiven.

To bigots and to sects unknown, 105
Bow down beneath the Almighty's Throne;
To Him address thy trembling prayer:
He, who is merciful and just,
Will not reject a child of dust,
Although his meanest care. 110

Father of Light! to Thee I call;
My soul is dark within:
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert the death of sin.
Thou, who canst guide the wandering star,
Who calm'st the elemental war, 116
Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,
My thoughts, my words, my crimes for-
give:

And, since I soon must cease to live,
Instruct me how to die. 120
1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO A VAIN LADY

Ah! heedless girl! why thus disclose
What ne'er was meant for other ears:
Why thus destroy thine own repose
And dig the source of future tears?

Oh, thou wilt weep, imprudent maid, 5
While lurking envious foes will smile,
For all the follies thou hast said
Of those who spoke but to beguile.

Vain girl! thy ling'ring woes are nigh,
If thou believ'st what striplings say:
Oh, from the deep temptation fly, 11
Nor fall the specious spoiler's prey.

Dost thou repeat, in childish boast,
The words man utters to deceive?
Thy peace, thy hope, thy all is lost, 15
If thou canst venture to believe.

While now amongst thy female peers
Thou tell'st again the soothing tale,
Canst thou not mark the rising sneers
Duplicity in vain would veil? 20

These tales in secret silence hush,
Nor make thyself the public gaze:
What modest maid without a blush
Recounts a flattering coxcomb's praise?

Will not the laughing boy despise 25
Her who relates each fond conceit—
Who, thinking Heaven is in her eyes,
Yet cannot see the slight deceit?

For she who takes a soft delight
These amorous nothings in revealing,
Must credit all we say or write, 31
While vanity prevents concealing.

Cease, if you prize your beauty's reign!
No jealousy bids me reprove:
One, who is thus from nature vain, 35
I pity, but I cannot love.

January 15, 1807.
[First published, 1832.]

TO ANNE

Oh, Anne, your offences to me have been
grievous:
I thought from my wrath no atonement
could save you:

But woman is made to command and de-
ceive us—
I look'd in your face, and I almost for-
gave you.

I vow'd I could ne'er for a moment re-
spect you, 5
Yet thought that a day's separation was
long;

When we met, I determined again to sus-
pect you—
Your smile soon convinced me suspi-
cion was wrong.

I swore, in a transport of young indigna-
tion,
With fervent contempt evermore to dis-
dain you: 10

I saw you—my anger became admiration;
And now, all my wish, all my hope's to
regain you.

With beauty like yours, oh, how vain the
contention!
Thus lowly I sue for forgiveness before
you;

At once to conclude such a fruitless dis-
sension, 15
Be false, my sweet Anne, when I cease
to adore you!

January 16, 1807.
[First published, 1832.]

TO THE SAME

Oh, say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates
have decreed
The heart which adores you should
wish to disserve;

Such Fates were to me most unkind ones
indeed,—
To bear me from love and from beauty
for ever.

Your frowns, lovely girl, are the Fates
which alone 5
Could bid me from fond admiration
refrain;

By these, every hope, every wish were
o'erthrown,
Till smiles should restore me to rapture
again.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

As the ivy and oak, in the forest entwined,
The rage of the tempest united must
weather; 10
My love and my life were by nature design'd
To flourish alike, or to perish together.

Then say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates
have decreed
Your lover should bid you a lasting
adieu;
Till Fate can ordain that his bosom shall
bleed, 15
His soul, his existence, are centred in
you.

1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO THE AUTHOR OF A SONNET

BEGINNING "SAD IS MY VERSE," YOU SAY,
"AND YET NO TEAR"

Thy verse is 'sad' enough, no doubt:
A devilish deal more sad than witty!
Why we should weep I can't find out,
Unless for *thee* we weep in pity.

Yet there is one I pity more; 5
And much, alas! I think he needs it;
For he, I'm sure, will suffer sore,
Who, to his own misfortune, reads it.

Thy rhymes, without the aid of magic,
May *once* be read—but never after:
Yet their effect's by no means tragic, 11
Although by far too dull for laughter.

But would you make our bosoms bleed,
And of no common pang complain—
If you would make us weep indeed, 15
Tell us, you'll read them o'er again.

March 8, 1807.

[First published, 1832.]

ON FINDING A FAN

In one who felt as once he felt,
This might, perhaps, have fann'd the
flame;
But now his heart no more will melt,
Because that heart is not the same.

As when the ebbing flames are low, 5
The aid which once improved their
light,
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their blaze in night.

Thus has it been with passion's fires—
As many a boy and girl remembers—
While every hope of love expires, 11
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

The *first*, though not a spark survive,
Some careful hand may teach to burn;
The *last*, alas! can ne'er survive; 15
No touch can bid its warmth return.

Or, if it chance to wake again,
Not always doom'd its heat to smother,
It sheds (so wayward fates ordain)
Its former warmth around another. 20
1807. [First published, 1832.]

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE

THOU Power! who hast ruled me through
infancy's days,
Young offspring of fancy, 'tis time we
should part;
Then rise on the gale this the last of my
lays,
The coldest effusion which springs from
my heart.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no
more, 5
Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore
thee to sing;
The feelings of childhood, which taught
thee to soar,
Are wafted far distant on Apathy's
wing.

Though simple the themes of my rude
flowing Lyre,
Yet even these themes are departed for
ever; 10
No more beam the eyes which my dream
could inspire,
My visions are flown, to return,—alas!
never.

When drain'd is the nectar which gladdens
the bowl,
How vain is the effort delight to pro-
long!

When cold is the beauty which dwelt in
my soul, 15
What magic of Fancy can lengthen my
song?

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert
alone,
Of kisses and smiles which they now
must resign?
Or dwell with delight on the hours that
are flown?
Ah, no! for those hours can no longer
be mine. 20

Can they speak of the friends that I lived
but to love?
Ah, surely affection ennobles the strain!
But how can my numbers in sympathy
move,
When I scarcely can hope to behold
them again?

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers
have done, 25
And raise my loud harp to the fame of
my Sires?

OCCASIONAL PIECES

For glories, like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!
 For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

But thou wert not fated affection to share—¹⁵
 For who could suppose that a stranger would feel!

Untouch'd, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast—
 'Tis hush'd; and my feeble endeavours are o'er;³⁰
 And those who have heard it will pardon the past,
 When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

Ah, droop not, my Oak! lift thy head for a while;
 Ere twice round yon Glory this planet shall run,
 The hand of thy Master will teach thee to smile,
 When Infancy's years of probation are done.²⁰

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,
 Since early affection and love are o'er-cast:
 Oh! blest had my fate been, and happy my lot,³⁵
 Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

Oh, live then, my Oak! tow'r aloft from the weeds,
 That clog thy young growth, and assist thy decay,
 For still in thy bosom are life's early seeds,
 And still may thy branches their beauty display.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;
 If our songs have been languid, they surely are few;
 Let us hope that the present at least will be sweet—
 The present—which seals our eternal Adieu.⁴⁰

Oh! yet, if maturity's years may be thine,
 Though I shall lie low in the cavern of death,²⁶
 On thy leaves yet the day-beam of ages may shine,
 Uninjured by time, or the rude winter's breath.

For centuries still may thy boughs lightly wave
 O'er the corse of thy lord in thy canopy laid;³⁰
 While the branches thus gratefully shelter his grave,
 The chief who survives may recline in thy shade.

TO AN OAK AT NEWSTEAD

YOUNG Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground,
 I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine;
 That thy dark-waving branches would flourish around,
 And ivy thy trunk with its mantle entwine.

And as he, with his boys, shall revisit this spot,
 He will tell them in whispers more softly to tread.
 Oh! surely, by these I shall ne'er be forgot;
 Remembrance still hallows the dust of the dead.³⁵

Such, such was my hope, when in infancy's years,⁵
 On the land of my fathers I rear'd thee with pride;
 They are past, and I water thy stem with my tears,—
 Thy decay not the weeds that surround thee can hide.

And here, will they say, when in life's glowing prime,
 Perhaps he has pour'd forth his young simple lay,
 And here must he sleep, till the moments of time
 Are lost in the hours of Eternity's day.^{1807. [First published, 1832.]}

I left thee, my Oak, and, since that fatal hour,
 A stranger has dwelt in the hall of my sire;¹⁰
 Till manhood shall crown me, not mine is the power,
 But his, whose neglect may have bade thee expire.

Oh! hardy thou wert—even now little care
 Might revive thy young head, and thy wounds gently heal:

ON REVISITING HARROW

HERE once engaged the stranger's view
 Young Friendship's record simply traced;
 Few were her words,—but yet, though few,
 Resentment's hand the line defaced.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Deeply she cut—but not erased, 5
The characters were still so plain,
That Friendship once return'd, and
gazed,—
Till Memory hail'd the words again.

Repentance placed them as before; 9
Forgiveness join'd her gentle name;
So fair the inscription seem'd once more,
That Friendship thought it still the
same.

Thus might the Record now have been;
But, ah, in spite of Hope's endeavour,
Or Friendship's tears, Pride rush'd be-
tween, 15
And blotted out the line for ever.

September 1807.

EPITAPH ON JOHN ADAMS, OF SOUTHWELL

A CARRIER, WHO DIED OF DRUNKENNESS
JOHN ADAMS lies here, of the parish of
Southwell,
A *Carrier* who *carried* his can to his mouth
well:

He *carried* so much, and he *carried* so fast,
He could *carry* no more—so was *carried*
at last;

For, the liquor he drank, being too much
for one, 5

He could not *carry* off,—so he's now
carri-on.

September 1807.

TO MY SON

THOSE flaxen locks, those eyes of blue,
Bright as thy mother's in their hue;
Those rosy lips, whose dimples play
And smile to steal the heart away,
Recall a scene of former joy, 5
And touch thy father's heart, my Boy!

And thou canst lisp a father's name—
Ah, William, were thine own the same,—
No self-reproach—but, let me cease—
My care for thee shall purchase peace; 10
Thy mother's shade shall smile in joy,
And pardon all the past, my Boy!

Her lowly grave the turf has prest,
And thou hast known a stranger's breast;
Derision sneers upon thy birth, 15
And yields thee scarce a name on earth;
Yet shall not these one hope destroy,—
A Father's heart is thine, my Boy!

Why, let the world unfeeling frown,
Must I fond Nature's claim disown? 20
Ah, no—though moralists reprove,
I hail thee, dearest child of love,
Fair cherub, pledge of youth and joy—
A Father guards thy birth, my Boy!

Oh, 'twill be sweet in thee to trace, 25
Ere age has wrinkled o'er my face,
Ere half my glass of life is run,
At once a brother and a son;
And all my wane of years employ
In justice done to thee, my Boy! 30

Although so young thy heedless sire,
Youth will not damp parental fire;
And, wert thou still less dear to me,
While Helen's form revives in thee,
The breast which beat to former joy, 35
Will ne'er desert its pledge, my Boy!

1807. [First published, 1830.]

FAREWELL! IF EVER FONDEST PRAYER

FAREWELL! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal avail'd on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,
But waft thy name beyond the sky. 4
'Twere vain to speak, to weep, to sigh:
Oh! more than tears of blood can tell,
When wrung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word—Farewell!—Fare-
well!

These lips are mute, these eyes are dry;
But in my breast and in my brain, 10
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns nor dares complain,
Though grief and passion there rebel;
I only know we loved in vain— 15
I only feel—Farewell!—Farewell!

1808.

BRIGHT BE THE PLACE OF THY SOUL

BRIGHT be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine, 5
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with
thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be: 10
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see; 15
For why should we mourn for the blest!

1808.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

WHEN we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well:—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?
With silence and tears.

TO A YOUTHFUL FRIEND

Few years have pass'd since thou and I
Were firmest friends, at least in name,
And childhood's gay sincerity
Preserved our feelings long the same.

But now, like me, too well thou know'st
What trifles oft the heart recall; 6
And those who once have loved the most
Too soon forget they loved at all.

And such the change the heart displays,
So frail is early friendship's reign,
A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,
Will view thy mind estranged again.

If so, it never shall be mine
To mourn the loss of such a heart; 14
The fault was Nature's fault, not thine,
Which made thee fickle as thou art.

As rolls the ocean's changing tide,
So human feelings ebb and flow;
And who would in a breast confide
Where stormy passions ever glow? 20

It boots not that, together bred,
Our childish days were days of joy:
My spring of life has quickly fled;
Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.

And when we bid adieu to youth, 25
Slaves to the specious world's control,
We sigh a long farewell to truth;
That world corrupts the noblest soul.

Ah, joyous season! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie; 30
When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye.

Not so in Man's maturer years, 15
When Man himself is but a tool; 34
When interest sways our hopes and fears,
And all must love and hate by rule.

With fools in kindred vice the same,
We learn at length our faults to bend;
And those, and those alone, may claim
The prostituted name of friend. 40

Such is the common lot of man:
Can we then 'scape from folly free?
Can we reverse the general plan,
Nor be what all in turn must be? 25

No; for myself, so dark my fate 45
Through every turn of life hath been;
Man and the world so much I hate,
I care not when I quit the scene. 30

But thou, with spirit frail and light,
Wilt shine awhile, and pass away; 50
As glow-worms sparkle through the night,
But dare not stand the test of day.

Alas! whenever folly calls
Where parasites and princes meet
(For cherish'd first in royal halls, 55
The welcome vices kindly greet),

Ev'n now thou'rt nightly seen to add
One insect to the fluttering crowd;
And still thy trifling heart is glad 59
To join the vain and court the proud.

There dost thou glide from fair to fair,
Still simpering on with eager haste,
As flies along the gay parterre
That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

But say, what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame, 67
An ignis-fatuus gleam of love?

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,
Will deign to own a kindred care? 70
Who will debase his manly mind,
For friendship every fool may share?

OCCASIONAL PIECES

In time forbear; amidst the throng
No more so base a thing be seen;
No more so idly pass along; 75
Be something, anything, but—mean. 1808.

LINES INSCRIBED UPON A CUP FORMED FROM A SKULL

START not—nor deem my spirit fled;
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.
I lived, I loved, I quaff'd, like thee: 5
I died: let earth my bones resign;
Fill up—thou canst not injure me;
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape,
Than nurse the earth-worm's slimy 10
brood;

And circle in the goblet's shape
The drink of gods, than reptile's food.

Where once my wit, perchance, hath shone,
In aid of others' let me shine;
And when, alas! our brains are gone, 15
What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst: another race,
When thou and thine, like me, are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not? since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce;
Redeem'd from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs, to be of use.

Newstead Abbey, 1808.

WELL! THOU ART HAPPY

WELL! thou art happy, and I feel
That I should thus be happy too;
For still my heart regards thy weal
Warmly, as it was wont to do. 4

Thy husband's blest—and 'twill impart
Some pangs to view his happier lot:
But let them pass—Oh! how my heart
Would hate him if he loved thee not!

When late I saw thy favourite child, 9
I thought my jealous heart would break;
But when the unconscious infant smiled,
I kiss'd it for its mother's sake. 12

I kiss'd it,—and repress'd my sighs
Its father in its face to see;
But then it had its mother's eyes, 15
And they were all to love and me.

Mary, adieu! I must away:
While thou art blest I'll not repine;
But near thee I can never stay; 19
My heart would soon again be thine.

I deem'd that time, I deem'd that pride,
Had quench'd at length my boyish
flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
My heart in all,—save hope,—the same.

Yet was I calm: I knew the time 25
My breast would thrill before thy look;
But now to tremble were a crime—
We met,—and not a nerve was shook.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there: 30
One only feeling could'st thou trace;
The sullen calmness of despair.

Away! away! my early dream
Remembrance never must awake:
Oh! where is Lethe's fabled stream? 35
My foolish heart, be still, or break.

November 2, 1808.

INSCRIPTION ON THE MONU- MENT OF A NEWFOUNDLAND DOG

WHEN some proud son of man returns to
earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of
woe,

And storied urns record who rest below:
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should
have been: 6

But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart is still his master's
own,

Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for
him alone, 10

Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth,
While man, vain insect! hopes to be for-
given, 4

And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.
Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,
Who knows thee well must quit thee with
disgust, 17

Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush
for shame.

Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on—it honours none you wish to
mourn:

To mark a friend's remains these stones
arise; 25

I never knew but one,—and here he lies.
Newstead Abbey, November 30, 1808.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

TO A LADY

ON BEING ASKED MY REASON FOR QUITTING
ENGLAND IN THE SPRING

WHEN Man, expell'd from Eden's bowers,
A moment linger'd near the gate,
Each scene recall'd the vanish'd hours,
And bade him curse his future fate.

But, wandering on through distant climes,
He learnt to bear his load of grief; 6
Just gave a sigh to other times,
And found in busier scenes relief.

Thus, lady! will it be with me,
And I must view thy charms no more;
For, while I linger near to thee, 11
I sigh for all I knew before.

In flight I shall be surely wise,
Escaping from temptation's snare;
I cannot view my paradise 15
Without the wish of dwelling there.

December 2, 1808.

REMIND ME NOT, REMIND ME NOT

REMIND me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved, those vanish'd hours,
When all my soul was given to thee;
Hours that may never be forgot,
Till time unnerves our vital powers, 5
And thou and I shall cease to be.

Can I forget—canst thou forget,
When playing with thy golden hair,
How quick thy fluttering heart did
move?

Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet, 10
With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
And lips, though silent, breathing
love.

When thus reclining on my breast,
Those eyes threw back a glance so sweet,
As half reproach'd yet raised desire,
And still we near and nearer prest, 16
And still our glowing lips would meet,
As if in kisses to expire.

And then those pensive eyes would close,
And bid their lids each other seek, 20
Veiling the azure orbs below;
While their long lashes' darken'd gloss
Seem'd stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,
Like raven's plumage smooth'd on
snow.

I dreamt last night our love return'd, 25
And, sooth to say, that very dream
Was sweeter in its phantasy,
Than if for other hearts I burn'd,
For eyes that ne'er like thine could
beam
In rapture's wild reality. 30

Then tell me not, remind me not,
Of hours which, though for ever gone,
Can still a pleasing dream restore,
Till thou and I shall be forgot, 34
And senseless, as the mouldering stone
Which tells that we shall be no more.

THERE WAS A TIME, I NEED NOT NAME

THERE was a time, I need not name,
Since it will ne'er forgotten be,
When all our feelings were the same
As still my soul hath been to thee.

And from that hour when first thy tongue
Confess'd a love which equal'd mine,
Though many a grief my heart hath
wrung, 7
Unknown, and thus unfelt, by thine,

None, none hath sunk so deep as this—
To think how all that love hath flown;
Transient as every faithless kiss, 11
But transient in thy breast alone.

And yet my heart some solace knew,
When late I heard thy lips declare,
In accents once imagined true, 15
Remembrance of the days that were.

Yes! my adored, yet most unkind!
Though thou wilt never love again,
To me 'tis doubly sweet to find
Remembrance of that love remain. 20

Yes! 'tis a glorious thought to me,
Nor longer shall my soul repine,
Whate'er thou art or e'er shalt be,
Thou hast been dearly, solely mine.

AND WILT THOU WEEP WHEN I AM LOW?

AND wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so—
I would not give that bosom pain.

My heart is sad, my hopes are gone, 5
My blood runs coldly through my
breast;
And when I perish, thou alone
Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

And yet, methinks, a gleam of peace
Doth through my cloud of anguish
shine: 10

And for a while my sorrows cease,
To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

Oh lady! blessed be that tear—
It falls for one who cannot weep;
Such precious drops are doubly dear 15
To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm
With every feeling soft as thine;
But beauty's self hath ceased to charm
A wretch created to repine. 20

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so—
I would not give that bosom pain.

FILL THE GOBLET AGAIN

A SONG

FILL the goblet again! for I never before
Felt the glow which now gladdens my
heart to its core;
Let us drink!—who would not?—since,
through life's varied round,
In the goblet alone no deception is found.

I have tried in its turn all that life can
supply;
I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling
eye;
I have loved!—who has not?—but what
heart can declare
That pleasure existed while passion was
there?

In the days of my youth, when the heart's
in its spring,
And dreams that affection can never take
wing,
I had friends!—who has not?—but what
tongue will avow,
That friends, rosy wine! are so faithful as
thou?

The heart of a mistress some boy may
estrangle,
Friendship shifts with the sunbeam—thou
never canst change;
Thou grow'st old—who does not?—but
on earth what appears,
Those virtues, like thine, still increase
with its years?

Yet if blest to the utmost that love can
bestow,
Should a rival bow down to our idol
below,
We are jealous!—who's not?—thou hast
no such alloy;
For the more that enjoy thee, the more
we enjoy. 20

Then the season of youth and its vanities
past,
For refuge we fly to the goblet at last;
There we find—do we not?—in the flow
of the soul,
That truth, as of yore, is confined to the
bowl.

When the box of Pandora was opened on
earth,
And Misery's triumph commenced over
Mirth,
Hope was left,—was she not?—but the
goblet we kiss,
And care not for Hope, who are certain
of bliss.

Long life to the grape! for when summer
is flown,
The age of our nectar shall gladden our
own:
We must die—who shall not?—May our
sins be forgiven,
And Hebe shall never be idle in heaven. 30

STANZAS TO A LADY, ON LEAVING ENGLAND

'Tis done—and shivering in the gale
The bark unfurls her snowy sail;
And whistling o'er the bending mast,
Loud sings on high the fresh'ning blast;
And I must from this land be gone,
Because I cannot love but one. 5

But could I be what I have been,
And could I see what I have seen—
Could I repose upon the breast
Which once my warmest wishes blest—
I should not seek another zone
Because I cannot love but one. 11

'Tis long since I beheld that eye
Which gave me bliss or misery;
And I have striven, but in vain,
Never to think of it again: 15
For though I fly from Albion,
I still can only love but one.

As some lone bird, without a mate,
My weary heart is desolate; 20
I look around, and cannot trace
One friendly smile or welcome face,
And ev'n in crowds am still alone,
Because I cannot love but one.

And I will cross the whitening foam, 25
And I will seek a foreign home;
Till I forget a false fair face,
I ne'er shall find a resting-place;
My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,
But ever love, and love but one. 30

The poorest, veriest wretch on earth
Still finds some hospitable hearth,
Where friendship's or love's softer glow
May smile in joy or soothe in woe;
But friend or leman I have none, 35
Because I cannot love but one.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

I go—but wheresoe'er I flee
There's not an eye will weep for me;
There's not a kind congenial heart,
Where I can claim the meanest part; 40
Nor thou, who hast my hopes undone,
Wilt sigh, although I love but one.

To think of every early scene,
Of what we are, and what we've been,
Would overwhelm some softer hearts with
woe— 45

But mine, alas! has stood the blow:
Yet still beats on as it begun,
And never truly loves but one.

And who that dear loved one may be,
Is not for vulgar eyes to see; 50
And why that early love was cross'd,
Thou know'st the best, I feel the most:
But few that dwell beneath the sun
Have loved so long, and loved but one.

I've tried another's fetters too, 55
With charms perchance as fair to view;
And I would fain have loved as well,
But some unconquerable spell
Forbade my bleeding breast to own
A kindred care for aught but one. 60

'Twould soothe to take one lingering view,
And bless thee in my last adieu;
Yet wish I not those eyes to weep
For him that wanders o'er the deep; 64
His home, his hope, his youth are gone,
Yet still he loves, and loves but one.

1809.

LINES TO MR. HODGSON

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE LISBON PACKET

HUZZA! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo's off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvas o'er the mast.
From aloft the signal's streaming, 5
Hark! the farewell gun is fired;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time's expired.
Here's a rascal
Come to task all, 10
Prying from the custom-house,
Trunks unpacking,
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket, 15
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We're impatient, push from shore. 20
'Have a care! that case holds liquor—
Stop the boat—I'm sick—oh Lord!'

'Sick, ma'am, damme, you'll be sicker
Ere you've been an hour on board.'

Thus are screaming 25

Men and women,
Gemmen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,

Stuck together close as wax.— 30
Such the general noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we've reach'd her, lo! the captain,
Gallant Kidd, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapt in, 35
Some to grumble, some to spew.

'Heyday! call you that a cabin?
Why 'tis hardly three feet square:
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in—
Who the deuce can harbour there?' 40

'Who, sir? plenty—
Nobles twenty

Did at once my vessel fill.'—

'Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us! 45

Would to God they did so still:
Then I'd scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship, Lisbon Packet.'

Fletcher! Murray! Bob! where are you?
Stretch'd along the deck like logs—
Bear a hand, you jolly tar, you! 51
Here's a rope's end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
As the hatchway down he rolls,
Now his breakfast, now his verses, 55
Vomits forth—and damns our souls.

'Here's a stanza
On Braganza—
Help!'—'A couplet?'—'No, a cup
Of warm water—' 60
'What's the matter?'

'Zounds! my liver's coming up:
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet.'

Now at length we're off for Turkey, 65
Lord knows when we shall come back!
Breezes foul and tempests murky
May unship us in a crack.

But, since life at most a jest is, 70
As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is,
Then laugh on—as I do now.

Laugh at all things,
Great and small things,

Sick or well, at sea or shore; 75
While we're quaffing,

Let's have laughing—
Who the devil cares for more?—

Some good wine! and who would lack it,
Ev'n on board the Lisbon Packet? 80

Falmouth Roads, June 30, 1809.
[First published, 1830.]

OCCASIONAL PIECES

TO FLORENCE

Oh Lady! when I left the shore,
The distant shore which gave me birth,
I hardly thought to grieve once more
To quit another spot on earth:

Yet here, amidst this barren isle, ⁵
Where panting Nature droops the head,
Where only thou art seen to smile,
I view my parting hour with dread.

Though far from Albin's craggy shore,
Divided by the dark-blue main; ¹⁰
A few, brief, rolling seasons o'er,
Perchance I view her cliffs again:

But wheresoe'er I now may roam,
Through scorching clime, and varied ¹⁴
sea,
Though Time restore me to my home,
I ne'er shall bend mine eyes on thee:

On thee, in whom at once conspire
All charms which heedless hearts can ¹⁹
move,
Whom but to see is to admire,
And, oh! forgive the word—to love.

Forgive the word, in one who ne'er
With such a word can more offend;
And since thy heart I cannot share,
Believe me, what I am, thy friend.

And who so cold as look on thee, ²⁵
Thou lovely wand'r'er, and be less?
Nor be, what man should ever be,
The friend of Beauty in distress?

Ah! who would think that form had past
Through Danger's most destructive ³⁰
path,
Had braved the death-wing'd tempest's
blast,
And 'scaped a tyrant's fiercer wrath?

Lady! when I shall view the walls
Where free Byzantium once arose,
And Stamboul's Oriental halls ³⁵
The Turkish tyrants now enclose;

Though mightiest in the lists of fame,
That glorious city still shall be;
On me 'twill hold a dearer claim, ⁴⁰
As spot of thy nativity:

And though I bid thee now farewell,
When I behold that wondrous scene,
Since where thou art I may not dwell,
'Twill soothe to be where thou hast ⁴⁵
been.

September 1809.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM, AT MALTA

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone
Some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye!

And when by thee that name is read, ⁵
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

September 14, 1809.

STANZAS COMPOSED DURING A THUNDER-STORM

CHILL and mirk is the nightly blast,
Where Pindus' mountains rise,
And angry clouds are pouring fast
The vengeance of the skies.

Our guides are gone, our hope is lost, ⁵
And lightnings, as they play,
But show where rocks our path have crost,
Or gild the torrent's spray.

Is yon a cot I saw, though low?
When lightning broke the gloom— ¹⁰
How welcome were its shade!—ah, no!
'Tis but a Turkish tomb.

Through sounds of foaming waterfalls,
I hear a voice exclaim—
My way-worn countryman, who calls ¹⁵
On distant England's name.

A shot is fired—by foe or friend?
Another—'tis to tell
The mountain-peasants to descend, ²⁰
And lead us where they dwell.

Oh! who in such a night will dare
To tempt the wilderness?
And who 'mid thunder-peals can hear
Our signal of distress?

And who that heard our shouts would ²⁵
rise
To try the dubious road?
Nor rather deem from nightly cries
That outlaws were abroad.

Clouds burst, skies flash, oh, dreadful
hour!
More fiercely pours the storm! ³⁰
Yet here one thought has still the power
To keep my bosom warm.

While wandering through each broken
path,
O'er brake and craggy brow;
While elements exhaust their wrath, ³⁵
Sweet Florence, where art thou?

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Not on the sea, not on the sea,
Thy bark hath long been gone:
Oh, may the storm that pours on me
Bow down my head alone!

Full swiftly blew the swift Siroc,
When last I press'd thy lip;
And long ere now, with foaming shock
Impell'd thy gallant ship.

Now thou art safe; nay, long ere now
Hast trod the shore of Spain;
'Twere hard if aught so fair as thou
Should linger on the main.

And since I now remember thee
In darkness and in dread,
As in those hours of revelry
Which mirth and music sped;

Do thou, amid the fair white walls,
If Cadiz yet be free,
At times from out her latticed halls
Look o'er the dark blue sea;

Then think upon Calypso's isles,
Endear'd by days gone by;
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh.

And when the admiring circle mark
The paleness of thy face,
A half-form'd tear, a transient spark
Of melancholy grace,

Again thou'lt smile, and blushing shun
Some coxcomb's rattery;
Nor own for once thou thought'st on one,
Who ever thinks on thee.

Though smile and sigh alike are vain,
When sever'd hearts repine,
My spirit flies o'er mount and main,
And mourns in search of thine.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN PASSING 'THE AMBRACIAN GULF

THROUGH cloudless skies, in silvery sheen,
Full beams the moon on Actium's
coast:

And on these waves, for Egypt's queen,
The ancient world was won and lost.

And now upon the scene I look,
The azure grave of many a Roman;
Where stern Ambition once forsook
His wavering crown to follow woman.

Florence! whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell),
Whilst thou art fair and I am young;

Sweet Florence! those were pleasant times,
When worlds were staked for ladies'
eyes:

Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Antonies.

Though Fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curl'd!
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.

Nov. 14, 1809.

THE SPELL IS BROKE, THE CHARM IS FLOWN!

WRITTEN AT ATHENS, JANUARY 16, 1810

THE spell is broke, the charm is flown!
Thus is it with life's fitful fever:
We madly smile when we should groan:
Delirium is our best deceiver.

Each lucid interval of thought
Recalls the woes of Nature's charter;
And he that acts as wise men ought,
But lives, as saints have died, a martyr.

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roar'd,
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For me, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat to-day.

But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo,—and—Lord knows what be-
side,

And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague
you!

He lost his labour, I my jest;
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague.

May 9, 1810.

LINES IN THE TRAVELLERS' BOOK AT ORCHOMENUS

IN THIS BOOK A TRAVELLER HAD
WRITTEN:—

'FAIR Albion, smiling, sees her son depart
To trace the birth and nursery of art:
Noble his object, glorious is his aim;
He comes to Athens, and he writes his
'name.'

OCCASIONAL PIECES

BENEATH WHICH LORD BYRON INSERTED
THE FOLLOWING:—

THE modest bard, like many a bard unknown,
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,
His theme would bring more credit than his verse.

1810.

MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART

Ζωή μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

MAID of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζωή μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woo'd by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζωή μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζωή μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone. 20
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζωή μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

Athens, 1810.

TRANSLATION OF THE NURSE'S DOLE IN THE MEDEA OF EURI- PIDES

OH how I wish that an embargo
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!
Who, still unlaunch'd from Grecian docks,
Had never pass'd the Azure rocks;
But now I fear her trip will be a 5
Damn'd business for my Miss Medea,
&c. &c.

June 1810.

MY EPITAPH

YOUTH, Nature, and relenting Jove,
To keep my lamp in strongly strove;
But Romanelli was so stout,
He beat all three—and blew it out.

Oct. 1810.

SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EPITAPH

KIND Reader! take your choice to cry or
laugh;
Here HAROLD lies—but where's his Epi-
taph?
If such you seek, try Westminster, and
view
Ten thousand just as fit for him as you.
Athens.

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH A PICTURE

DEAR object of defeated care!
Though now of Love and thee bereft,
To reconcile me with despair,
Thine image and my tears are left.

'Tis said with Sorrow Time can cope; 5
But this I feel can ne'er be true:
For by the death-blow of my Hope
My Memory immortal grew.

Athens, January 1811.

TRANSLATION OF THE FAMOUS GREEK WAR SONG

Δεῦτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων.

SONS of the Greeks, arise!
The glorious hour's gone forth,
And, worthy of such ties,
Display who gave us birth.

CHORUS.

Sons of Greeks! let us go 5
In arms against the foe,
Till their hated blood shall flow
In a river past our feet.

Then manfully despising
The Turkish tyrant's yoke, 10
Let your country see you rising,
And all her chains are broke.
Brave shades of chiefs and sages,
Behold the coming strife!
Hellènes of past ages, 15
Oh, start again to life!
At the sound of my trumpet, breaking
Your sleep, oh, join with me!
And the seven-hill'd city seeking,
Fight, conquer, till we're free. 20

Sons of Greeks, &c.

Sparta, Sparta, why in slumbers
Lethargic dost thou lie?
Awake, and join thy numbers
With Athens, old ally!
Leonidas recalling, 25
That chief of ancient song,
Who saved ye once from falling,
The terrible! the strong!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Who made that bold diversion
In old Thermopylæ,
And warring with the Persian
To keep his country free;
With his three hundred waging
The battle, long he stood,
And like a lion raging,
Expired in seas of blood.

Sons of Greeks, &c.

TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAIC SONG

"Μπένω μες τὸ περιβόλι
'Ὁρασιδάτη Χαηδέη," κ.τ.λ.

I ENTER thy garden of roses,
Beloved and fair Haidée,
Each morning where Flora reposes,
For surely I see her in thee.
Oh, Lovely! thus low I implore thee, 5
Receive this fond truth from my tongue,

Which utters its song to adore thee,
Yet trembles for what it has sung;
As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
Through her eyes, through her every feature, 11
Shines the soul of the young Haidée.

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
When Love has abandon'd the bowers;
Bring me hemlock—since mine is ungrateful, 15
That herb is more fragrant than flowers.
The poison, when pour'd from the chalice,
Will deeply embitter the bowl;
But when drunk to escape from thy malice,
The draught shall be sweet to my soul.
Too cruel! in vain I implore thee 21
My heart from these horrors to save:
Will nought to my bosom restore thee?
Then open the gates of the grave.

As the chief who to combat advances 25
Secure of his conquest before,
Thus thou, with those eyes for thy lances,
Hast pierced through my heart to its core.

Ah, tell me, my soul! must I perish
By pangs which a smile would dispel?
Would the hope, which thou once bad'st
me cherish, 31
For torture repay me too well?
Now sad is the garden of roses,
Beloved but false Haidée!

There Flora all wither'd reposes, 35
And mourns o'er thine absence with me.
1811.

ON PARTING

THE kiss, dear maid! thy lip has left
Shall never part from mine,
Till happier hours restore the gift
Untainted back to thine.

Thy parting glance, which fondly beams,
30 An equal love may see:
The tear that from thine eyelid streams
Can weep no change in me. 6

I ask no pledge to make me blest
In gazing when alone; 10
Nor one memorial for a breast,
Whose thoughts are all thine own.

Nor need I write—to tell the tale
My pen were doubly weak:
Oh! what can idle words avail, 15
Unless the heart could speak?

By day or night, in weal or woe,
That heart, no longer free,
Must bear the love it cannot show,
And silent ache for thee. 20
March 1811.

EPITAPH FOR JOSEPH BLACKETT, LATE POET AND SHOEMAKER

STRANGER! behold, interr'd together,
The souls of learning and of leather.
Poor Joe is gone, but left his all:
You'll find his relics in a stall.
His works were neat, and often found 5
Well stitch'd, and with morocco bound.
Tread lightly—where the bard is laid
He cannot mend the shoe he made;
Yet is he happy in his hole,
With verse immortal as his sole. 10
But still to business he held fast,
And stuck to Phœbus to the last.
Then who shall say so good a fellow
Was only 'leather and prunella?'
For character—he did not lack it; 15
And if he did, 'twere shame to 'Black it.'
Malta, May 16, 1811.

FAREWELL TO MALTA

ADIEU, ye joys of La Valette!
Adieu, sirocco, sun, and sweat!
Adieu, thou palace rarely enter'd!
Adieu, ye mansions where—I've ventured!
Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs! 5
(How surely he who mounts you swears!)
Adieu, ye merchants often failing!
Adieu, thou mob for ever railing!
Adieu, ye packets—without letters!
Adieu, ye fools—who ape your betters! 11
Adieu, thou damned'st quarantine,
That gave me fever, and the spleen!
Adieu, that stage which makes us yawn,
Sirs,
Adieu, his Excellency's dancers!
Adieu to Peter—whom no fault's in, 15
But could not teach a colonel waltzing;
Adieu, ye females fraught with graces!
Adieu, red coats, and redder faces!
Adieu, the supercilious air
Of all that strut 'en militaire!' 20

OCCASIONAL PIECES

ONE STRUGGLE MORE, AND I AM FREE

ONE struggle more, and I am free
 From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
 One last long sigh to love and thee,
 Then back to busy life again.
 It suits me well to mingle now 5
 With things that never pleased before!
 Though every joy is fled below,
 What future grief can touch me more?

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring;
 Man was not form'd to live alone: 10
 I'll be that light, unmeaning thing
 That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
 It was not thus in days more dear,
 It never would have been, but thou
 Hast fled, and left me lonely here; 15
 Thou'rt nothing—all are nothing now.

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
 The smile that sorrow fain would wear
 But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
 Like roses o'er a sepulchre. 20
 Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill:
 Though pleasure fires the maddening soul,
 The heart,—the heart is lonely still!

On many a lone and lovely night 25
 It sooth'd to gaze upon the sky;
 For then I deem'd the heavenly light
 Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye:
 And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
 When sailing o'er the Ægean wave,
 'Now Thyrsa gazes on that moon'—
 Alas, it gleam'd upon her grave! 32

When stretch'd on fever's sleepless bed,
 And sickness shrunk my throbbing veins,
 'Tis comfort still, I faintly said, 35
 'That Thyrsa cannot know my pains:'
 Like freedom to the time-worn slave,
 A boon 'tis idle then to give,
 Relenting Nature vainly gave
 My life, when Thyrsa ceased to live!

My Thyrsa's pledge in better days, 41
 When love and life alike were new!
 How different now thou meet'st my gaze!
 How tinged by time with sorrow's hue!
 The heart that gave itself with thee 45
 Is silent—ah, were mine as still!
 Though cold as e'en the dead can be,
 It feels, it sickens with the chill.

Thou bitter pledge! thou mournful token!
 Though painful, welcome to my breast!
 Still, still preserve that love unbroken,
 Or break the heart to which thou'rt
 press'd.

Time tempers love, but not removes,
 More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
 Oh! what are thousand living loves 55
 To that which cannot quit the dead?

EUTHANASIA

WHEN Time, or soon or late, shall bring
 The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
 Oblivion! may thy languid wing
 Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there, 5
 To weep, or wish, the coming blow:
 No maiden, with dishevelled hair,
 To feel, or feign, decorous woe.

But silent let me sink to earth,
 With no officious mourners near: 10
 I would not mar one hour of mirth,
 Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
 Could nobly check its useless sighs,
 Might then exert its latest power 15
 In her who lives, and him who dies.

'Twere sweet, my Psyche! to the last
 Thy features still serene to see:
 Forgetful of its struggles past,
 E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

But vain the wish—for Beauty still 21
 Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing
 breath;
 And women's tears, produced at will,
 Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour, 25
 Without regret, without a groan;
 For thousands Death hath ceas'd to lower,
 And pain been transient or unknown.

'Ay, but to die, and go,' alas!
 Where all have gone, and all must go!
 To be the nothing that I was 31
 Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
 Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
 And know, whatever thou hast been, 35
 'Tis something better not to be.

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

'Heu, quanto minus est cum reliquis versari
 quam tui meminisse!'

AND thou art dead, as young and fair
 As aught of mortal birth;
 And form so soft, and charms so rare,
 Too soon return'd to Earth!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Though Earth received them in her bed
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine,
That all those charms have pass'd away;
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last;
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.

February 1812.

IF SOMETIMES IN THE HAUNTS OF MEN

If sometimes in the haunts of men
Thine image from my breast may fade,
The lonely hour presents again
The semblance of thy gentle shade:
And now that sad and silent hour
Thus much of thee can still restore,
And sorrow unobserved may pour
The plaint she dare not speak before.

Oh, pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And self-condemn'd, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory:
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly thine.

If not the goblet pass unquaff'd,
It is not drain'd to banish care;
The cup must hold a deadlier draught,
That brings a Lethe for despair.
And could Oblivion set my soul
From all her troubled visions free,
I'd dash to earth the sweetest bowl
That drown'd a single thought of thee.

For wert thou vanish'd from my mind,
Where could my vacant bosom turn?
And who would then remain behind
To honour thine abandon'd Urn?
No, no—it is my sorrow's pride
That last dear duty to fulfil:
Though all the world forget beside,
'Tis meet that I remember still.

For well I know, that such had been
Thy gentle care for him, who now
Unmourn'd shall quit this mortal scene,
Where none regarded him, but thou:
And, oh! I feel in that was given
A blessing never meant for me;
Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven
For earthly Love to merit thee.

March 14, 1812.

FROM THE FRENCH

ÆGLE, beauty and poet, has two little
crimes;
She makes her own face, and does not
make her rhymes.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

ON A CORNELIAN HEART WHICH WAS BROKEN

ILL-FATED Heart! and can it be,
That thou should'st thus be rent in
twain?

Have years of care for thine and thee
Alike been all employ'd in vain?

Yet precious seems each shatter'd part,
And every fragment dearer grown, 6
Since he who wears thee feels thou art
A fitter emblem of *his own*.

March 16, 1812.

LINES TO A LADY WEeping

WEEP, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away!

Weep—for thy tears are Virtue's tears—
Auspicious to these suffering isles; 6
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles!

March 1812.

THE CHAIN I GAVE

FROM THE TURKISH

THE chain I gave was fair to view,
The lute I added sweet in sound;
The heart that offer'd both was true,
And ill deserved the fate it found.

These gifts were charm'd by secret spell,
Thy truth in absence to divine; 6
And they have done their duty well,—
Alas! they could not teach thee thine.

That chain was firm in every link,
But not to bear a stranger's touch; 10
That lute was sweet—till thou could'st
think

In other hands its notes were such.

Let him who from thy neck unbound
The chain which shiver'd in his grasp,
Who saw that lute refuse to sound, 15
Restraining the chords, renew the clasp.

When thou wert changed, they alter'd too;
The chain is broke, the music mute.
'Tis past—to them and thee adieu—
False heart, frail chain, and silent lute.

LINES WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF 'THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY'

ABSENT or present, still to thee;
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell, who share, like me, 4
In turn thy converse and thy song.

But when the dreaded hour shall come
By Friendship ever deem'd too nigh,
And 'MEMORY' o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die,

How fondly will she then repay
Thy homage offer'd at her shrine, 10
And blend, while ages roll away,
Her name immortally with *thine*!
April 19, 1812.

ADDRESS, SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1812

In one dread night our city saw, and sigh'd,
Bow'd to the dust, the Drama's tower of
pride;
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to
reign.

Ye who beheld, (oh! sight admired and
mourn'd,
Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it
adorn'd!) 5

Through clouds of fire the massy frag-
ments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from
heaven;

Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled
Thames, 10

While thousands, throng'd around the
burning dome,
Shrank back appall'd, and trembled for
their home,

As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly
shone

The skies, with lightnings awful as their
own, 14

Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurp'd the Muse's realm, and mark'd
her fall;

Say—shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,
Rear'd where once rose the mightiest in
our isle,

Know the same favour which the former
knew,

A shrine for Shakspeare—worthy him
and *you*? 20

Yes—it shall be—the magic of that
name

Defies the scythe of time, the torch of
flame;

On the same spot still consecrates the
scene,

And bids the Drama *be* where she hath
been;

This fabric's birth attests the potent
spell— 25

Indulge our honest pride, and say, *How*
well!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

As soars this fane to emulate the last,
Oh! might we draw our omens from the
past,
Some hour propitious to our prayers may
boast

Names such as hallow still the dome we
lost.

On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
O'erwhelm'd the gentlest, storm'd the
sternest heart.

On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew;
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew,
Sigh'd his last thanks, and wept his last
adieu:

But still for living wit the wreaths may
bloom,

That only waste their odours o'er the
tomb.

Such Drury claim'd and claims—nor you
refuse

One tribute to revive his slumbering
muse;

With garlands deck your own Menander's
head,

Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead.
Dear are the days which made our annals
bright,

Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to
write.

Heirs to their labours, like all high-born
heirs,

Vain of *our* ancestry as they of *theirs*;
While thus Remembrance borrows Ban-
quo's glass

To claim the sceptred shadows as they
pass,

And we the mirror hold, where imaged
shine

Immortal names, emblazon'd on our line,
Pause—ere their feebler offspring you
condemn,

Reflect how hard the task to rival them!

Friends of the stage! to whom both
Players and Plays

Must sue alike for pardon or for praise,
Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
The boundless power to cherish or reject;
If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
And made us blush that you forbore to
blame;

If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
To soothe the sickly taste it dare not mend,
All past reproach may present scenes re-
fute,

And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute!
Oh! since your fiat stamps the Drama's
laws,

Forbear to mock us with misplaced ap-
plause;

So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's
powers,

And reason's voice be echo'd back by
ours!

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule
obey'd,

The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
Receive *our* welcome too, whose every
tone

Springs from our hearts, and fain would
win your own.

The curtain rises—may our stage unfold
Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old!
Britons our judges, Nature for our guide,
Still may we please—long, long may *you*
preside.

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PARENTHETICAL ADDRESS

BY DR. PLAGIARY

*Half stolen, with acknowledgments, to be spoken
in an inarticulate voice by Master P. at the open-
ing of the next new theatre. Stolen parts marked
with the inverted commas of quotation—thus*

'WHEN energising objects men pursue,'
Then Lord knows what is writ by Lord
knows who.

'A modest monologue you here survey,'
Hiss'd from the theatre the 'other day,'
As if Sir Fretful wrote 'the slumberous'

verse,
And gave his son 'the rubbish' to re-
hearse.

'Yet at the thing you'd never be amazed,'
Knew you the rumpus which the author
raised,

'Nor even here your smiles would be re-
prest,'

Knew you these lines—the badness of the
best,

'Flame! fire! and flame!' (words borrowed
from Lucretius,)

'Dread metaphors which open wounds'
like issues!

'And sleeping pangs awake—and—but
away'

(Confound me if I know what next to say),
'Lo Hope reviving re-expands her wings,'

And Master G— recites what Dr. Busby
sings!—

'If mighty things with small we may com-
pare,'

(Translated from the grammar for the
fair!)

Dramatic 'spirit drives a conquering car,'
And burn'd poor Moscow like a tub of

'tar.'

'This spirit Wellington has shown in
Spain,'

To furnish melodramas for Drury Lane.
'Another Marlborough points to Blen-
heim's story,'

And George and I will dramatise it for ye.

'In arts and sciences our isle hath
shone'

(This deep discovery is mine alone).

OCCASIONAL PIECES

'Oh British poesy, whose powers inspire'
My verse—or I'm a fool—and Fame's a
liar,

'Thee we invoke, your sister arts implore'
With 'smiles,' and 'lyres,' and 'pencils,'
and much more.

These, if we win the Graces, too, we gain
Disgraces, too! 'inseparable train!'

'Three who have stolen their witching
airs from Cupid'

(You all know what I mean, unless you're
stupid):

'Harmonious throng' that I have kept in
petto

Now to produce in a 'divine *sestetto*'!!

'While Poesy,' with these delightful doxies,
'Sustains her part' in all the 'upper'
boxes!

'Thus lifted gloriously, you'll soar along,'
Borne in the vast balloon of Busby's

song;

'Shine in your farce, masque, scenery,
and play'

(For this last line George had a holiday).
'Old Drury never, never soar'd so high,'
So says the manager, and so say I.

'But hold, you say, this self-complacent
boast;

Is this the poem which the public lost?
'True—true—that lowers at once our
mounting pride;'

But lo!—the papers print what you
deride.

'Tis ours to look on you—you hold the
prize,'

'Tis *twenty guineas*, as they advertise! 50
'A double blessing your rewards impart!—
I wish I had them, then, with all my heart.

'Our *twofold* feeling *owns* its twofold
cause,'

Whys on and I both beg for your applause.
'When in your fostering beams you bid
us live,'

My next subscription list shall say how
much you give!

October 1812.

VERSES FOUND IN A SUMMER- HOUSE AT HALES-OWEN

WHEN Dryden's fool, 'unknowing what
he sought,'

His hours in whistling spent, 'for want of
thought,'

This guiltless oaf his vacancy of sense
Supplied, and amply too, by innocence:

Did modern swains, possess'd of Cymon's
powers,

In Cymon's manner waste their leisure
hours,

Th' offended guests would not, with blush-
ing, see

These fair green walks disgraced by in-
famy.

Severe the fate of modern fools, alas!
When vice and folly mark them as they
pass.

Like noxious reptiles o'er the whiten'd
wall,

The filth they leave still points out where
they crawl.

REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!

REMEMBER thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream

Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Ay, doubt it not. 5
Thy husband too shall think of thee!

By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou *false* to him, thou *fiend* to me!

TO TIME

TIME! on whose arbitrary wing
The varying hours must flag or fly,

Whose tardy winter, fleeting spring,
But drag or drive us on to die—

Hail thou! who on my birth bestow'd
Those boons to all that know thee

known;

Yet better I sustain thy load,
For now I bear the weight alone.

I would not one fond heart should share
The bitter moments thou hast given;

And pardon thee, since thou could'st
spare

All that I loved, to peace or heaven.

To them be joy or rest, on me
Thy future ills shall press in vain;

I nothing owe but years .o thee, 15
A debt already paid in pain.

Yet even that pain was some relief,
It felt, but still forgot thy power:

The active agony of grief 19
Retards, but never counts the hour.

In joy I've sigh'd to think thy flight
Would soon subside from swift to

slow;

Thy cloud could overcast the light,
But could not add a night to woe;

For then, however drear and dark, 25
My soul was suited to thy sky;

One star alone shot forth a spark
To prove thee—not Eternity.

That beam hath sunk, and now thou art
A blank; a thing to count and curse,

Through each dull tedious trifling part,
Which all regret, yet all rehearse. 32

OCCASIONAL PIECES

One scene even thou canst not deform;
The limit of thy sloth or speed
When future wanderers bear the storm
Which we shall sleep too sound to
 head: 36

And I can smile to think how weak
Thine efforts shortly shall be shown,
When all the vengeance thou canst wreak
Must fall upon—a nameless stone.

TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG

AH! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my woe, 5
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows well I knew;
Alas! I find them poison'd too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set;
Or, circled by his fatal fire, 11
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare, 15
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance. 20

In flattering dreams I deem'd thee mine;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline;
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion, and thy power.

My light of life! ah, tell me why 25
That pouting lip, and alter'd eye?
My bird of love! my beauteous mate!
And art thou changed, and canst thou
 hate?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow:
What wretch with me would barter woe?
My bird! relent: one note could give
A charm to bid thy lover live. 32

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain;
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults—while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison; fear not thou!
Thou canst not murder more than now:
I've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest? 42
Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe.

THOU ART NOT FALSE, BUT THOU ART FICKLE

Thou art not false, but thou art fickle,
To those thyself so fondly sought;
The tears that thou hast forced to trickle
Are doubly bitter from that thought:
'Tis this which breaks the heart thou
 grievest, 5
Too well thou lov'st—too soon thou
 leavest.

The wholly false the heart despises,
And spurns deceiver and deceit;
But she who not a thought disguises,
Whose love is as sincere as sweet,—
When she can change who loved so truly,
It feels what mine has felt so newly. 12

To dream of joy and wake to sorrow
Is doom'd to all who love or live;
And if, when conscious on the morrow,
We scarce our fancy can forgive, 16
That cheated us in slumber only,
To leave the waking soul more lonely,

What must they feel whom no false vision,
But truest, tenderest passion warm'd?
Sincere, but swift in sad transition; 21
As if a dream alone had charm'd?
Ah! sure such grief is fancy's scheming,
And all thy change can be but dreaming!

ON BEING ASKED WHAT WAS THE 'ORIGIN OF LOVE'

THE 'Origin of Love!'—Ah, why
That cruel question ask of me,
When thou may'st read in many an eye
He starts to life on seeing thee?

And should'st thou seek his end to
 know: 5
My heart forebodes, my fears foresee,
He'll linger long in silent woe;
But live—until I cease to be.

REMEMBER HIM WHOM PASSION'S POWER

REMEMBER him whom passion's power
Severely, deeply, vainly proved:
Remember thou that dangerous hour,
When neither fell, though both were
 loved. 4

That yielding breast, that melting eye,
Too much invited to be bless'd:
That gentle prayer, that pleading sigh,
The wilder wish reproved, repress'd.

Oh! let me feel that all I lost
But saved thee all that conscience
 fears; 10
And blush for every pang it cost
To spare the vain remorse of years.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Yet think of this when many a tongue,
Whose busy accents whisper blame,
Would do the heart that loved thee
wrong,
And brand a nearly blighted name. ¹⁵

Think that, whate'er to others, thou
Hast seen each selfish thought subdued:
I less thy purer soul even now,
Even now, in midnight solitude. ²⁰

Oh, God! that we had met in time,
Our hearts as fond, thy hand more free;
When thou hadst loved without a crime,
And I been less unworthy thee!

Far may thy days, as heretofore, ²⁵
From this our gaudy world be past!
And that too bitter moment o'er,
Oh! may such trial be thy last.

This heart, alas! perverted long, ²⁹
Itself destroy'd might there destroy;
To meet thee in the glittering throng,
Would wake Presumption's hope of joy.

Then to the things whose bliss or woe,
Like mine, is wild and worthless all,
That world resign—such scenes forego,
Where those who feel must surely fall.

Thy youth, thy charms, thy tenderness,
Thy soul from long seclusion pure;
From what even here hath pass'd, may
guess
What there thy bosom must endure.

Oh! pardon that imploring tear, ⁴¹
Since not by Virtue shed in vain,
My frenzy drew from eyes so dear;
For me they shall not weep again.

Though long and mournful must it be,
The thought that we no more may
meet; ⁴⁶

Yet I deserve the stern decree,
And almost deem the sentence sweet.

Still, had I loved thee less, my heart
Had then less sacrificed to thine; ⁵⁰
It felt not half so much to part
As if its guilt had made thee mine. ^{1813.}

ON LORD THURLOW'S POEMS

WHEN Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent
(I hope I am not violent),
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.

And since not even our Rogers' praise
To common sense his thoughts could
raise—
Why *would* they let him print his lays? ⁵

To me, divine Apollo, grant—O!
Hermilda's first and second canto,
I'm fitting up a new portmanteau;

And thus to furnish decent lining, ¹⁰
My own and others' bays I'm twining,—
So, gentle Thurlow, throw me thine in.

TO LORD THURLOW

'I lay my branch of laurel down,
Then thus to form Apollo's crown,
Let every other bring his own.'

Lord Thurlow's lines to Mr. Rogers

'I lay my branch of laurel down.'

THOU 'lay thy branch of laurel down!' ¹
Why, what thou'st stole is not enow;
And, were it lawfully thine own,
Does Rogers want it most, or thou? ⁵
Keep to thyself thy wither'd bough,
Or send it back to Doctor Donne:
Were justice done to both, I trow,
He'd have but little, and thou—none.

'Then thus to form Apollo's crown.'

A crown! why, twist it how you will, ¹⁰
Thy chaplet must be foolscap still.
When next you visit Delphi's town,
Inquire amongst your fellow-lodgers,
They'll tell you Phœbus gave his crown,
Some years before your birth, to Rogers.

'Let every other bring his own.'

When coals to Newcastle are carried,
And owls sent to Athens, as wonders,
From his spouse when the Regent's un-
married, ¹⁷
Or Liverpool weeps o'er his blunders;
When Tories and Whigs cease to quarrel,
When Castlereagh's wife has an heir,
Then Rogers shall ask us for laurel,
And thou shalt have plenty to spare.

TO THOMAS MOORE

WRITTEN THE EVENING BEFORE HIS VISIT
TO MR. LEIGH HUNT IN HORSEMONGER
LANE GAOL, MAY 19, 1813

OH you, who in all names can tickle the town,
Anacreon, Tom Little, Tom Moore, or
Tom Brown,
For hang me if I know of which you
may most brag,
Your Quarto two-pounds, or your Two-
penny Post Bag;

But now to my letter—to *yours* 'tis an
answer— ⁵
To-morrow be with me, as soon as you
can, sir,
All ready and dress'd for proceeding to
spunge on
(According to compact) the wit in the
dungeon—

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Pray Phœbus at length our political malice
 May not get us lodgings within the same
 palace!¹⁰
 I suppose that to-night you're engaged
 with some codgers,
 And for Sotheby's Blues have deserted
 Sam Rogers;
 And I, though with cold I have nearly
 my death got,
 Must put on my breeches, and wait on
 the Heathcote;
 But to-morrow, at four, we will both
 play the *Scurra*,¹⁵
 And you'll be Catullus, the Regent
 Mamurra.

[First published in 1830.]

IMPROMPTU, IN REPLY TO A FRIEND

WHEN, from the heart where Sorrow sits,
 Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
 And o'er the changing aspect flits,
 And clouds the brow, or fills the eye;
 Heed not that gloom, which soon shall
 sink:⁵
 My thoughts their dungeon know too
 well;
 Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
 And droop within their silent cell.

September 1813.

SONNET, TO GENEVRA

THINE eyes' blue tenderness, thy long
 fair hair,
 And the wan lustre of thy features—
 caught
 From contemplation—where serenely
 wrought,
 Seems Sorrow's softness charm'd from
 its despair—
 Have thrown such speaking sadness in
 thine air,⁵
 That—but I know thy blessed bosom
 fraught
 With mines of unalloy'd and stainless
 thought—
 I should have deem'd thee doom'd to
 earthly care.
 With such an aspect, by his colours blent,
 When from his beauty-breathing pen-
 cil born¹⁰
 (Except that *thou* hast nothing to repent),
 The Magdalen of Guido saw the
 morn—
 Such seem'st thou—but how much more
 excellent!
 With nought Remorse can claim—nor
 Virtue scorn.

December 17, 1813.

SONNET, TO THE SAME

THY cheek is pale with thought, but not
 from woe,
 And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could
 flush
 Its rose of whiteness with the brightest
 blush,
 My heart would wish away that ruder
 glow:
 And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes—but,
 oh!⁵
 While gazing on them sterner eyes will
 gush,
 And into mine my mother's weakness
 rush,
 Soft as the last drops round heaven's
 airy bow.
 For, through thy long dark lashes low
 depending,
 The soul of melancholy Gentleness
 Gleams like a seraph from the sky de-
 scending,¹¹
 Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
 At once such majesty with sweetness
 blending,
 I worship more, but cannot love thee
 less.

December 17, 1813.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE

‘TU MI CHAMAS’

IN moments to delight devoted,
 ‘My life!’ with tenderest tone, you cry;
 Dear words! on which my heart had doted,
 If youth could neither fade nor die.
 To death even hours like these must roll,
 Ah! then repeat those accents never;
 Or change ‘my life!’ into ‘my soul!’
 Which, like my love, exists for ever.

ANOTHER VERSION

YOU call me still your *life*.—Oh! change
 the word—
 Life is as transient as the inconstant
 sigh:
 Say rather I'm your soul; more just that
 name,
 For, like the soul, my love can never die.

THE DEVIL'S DRIVE

AN UNFINISHED RHAPSODY

THE Devil return'd to hell by two,
 And he stay'd at home till five;
 When he dined on some homicides done
 in *ragout*,
 And a rebel or so in an *Irish* stew,
 And sausages made of a self-slain Jew—
 And bethought himself what next to do,
 ‘And,’ quoth he, ‘I'll take a drive.’⁷
 I walk'd in the morning, I'll ride to-night;
 In darkness my children take most delight,
 And I'll see how my favourites thrive.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

'And what shall I ride in?' quoth Lucifer
then—

'If I follow'd my taste, indeed,
I should mount in a waggon of wounded
men,

And smile to see them bleed.
But these will be furnish'd again and
again,

And at present my purpose is speed;
To see my manor as much as I may,
And watch that no souls shall be poach'd
away.

'I have a state-coach at Carlton House,
A chariot in Seymour Place;

But they're lent to two friends, who
make me amends,

By driving my favourite pace:
And they handle their reins with such
a grace,

I have something for both at the end of
their race.

'So now for the earth to take my chance:'
Then up to the earth sprang he;

And making a jump from Moscow to
France,

He stepp'd across the sea,
And rested his hoof on a turnpike road,
No very great way from a bishop's
abode.

But first as he flew, I forgot to say
That he hover'd a moment upon his way,

To look upon Leipsic plain;
And so sweet to his eye was its sulphury
glare,

And so soft to his ear was the cry of
despair,

That he perch'd on a mountain of
slain;

And he gazed with delight from its grow-
ing height,

Nor often on earth had he seen such a
sight,

Nor his work done half as well:
For the field ran so red with the blood of
the dead,

That it blush'd like the waves of hell!
Then loudly, and wildly, and long laugh'd
he:

'Methinks they have here little need of
me!'

But the softest note that soothed his ear
Was the sound of a widow sighing;

And the sweetest sight was the icy tear,
Which horror froze in the blue eye clear
Of a maid by her lover lying—

As round her fell her long fair hair;
And she look'd to heaven with that
frenzied air,

Which seem'd to ask if a God were there!
And, stretch'd by the wall of a ruin'd hut,

With its hollow cheek, and eyes half shut,
A child of famine dying:

And the carnage begun, when resistance
is done,

And the fall of the vainly flying!

But the Devil has reach'd our cliffs so
white,

And what did he there, I pray?
If his eyes were good, he but saw by
night

What we see every day:
But he made a tour, and kept a journal
Of all the wondrous sights nocturnal,

And he sold it in shares to the *Men of*
the *Row*,

Who bid pretty well—but they *cheated*
him, though!

The Devil first saw, as he thought, the
Mail,

Its coachman and his coat;
So instead of a pistol he cock'd his tail,
And seized him by the throat:

'Aha!' quoth he, 'what have we here?
'Tis a new barouche, and an ancient
peer!'

So he sat him on his box again,
And bade him have no fear,

But be true to his club, and stanch to
his rein,

His brothel, and his beer;
'Next to seeing a lord at the council
board,

I would rather see him here.'

The Devil gat next to Westminster,
And he turn'd to 'the room' of the
Commons;

But he heard, as he purpos'd to enter in
there,

That 'the Lords' had received a sum-
mons;

And he thought, as a '*quondam* aristocrat,'
He might peep at the peers, though to
hear them were flat;

And he walk'd up the house so like one
of our own,

That they say that he stood pretty near
the throne.

He saw the Lord Liverpool seemingly
wise,

The Lord Westmoreland certainly
silly,

And Johnny of Norfolk—a man of some
size—

And Chatham, so like his friend Billy;
And he saw the tears in Lord Eldon's
eyes,

Because the Catholics would *not* rise,
In spite of his prayers and his prophe-
cies;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

And he heard—which set Satan himself
a staring—
A certain Chief Justice say something
like *swearing*.
And the Devil was shock'd—and quoth
he, 'I must go,
For I find we have much better manners
below: 95
If thus he harangues when he passes my
border,
I shall hint to friend Moloch to call him
to order.'

WINDSOR POETICS

Lines composed on the occasion of His Royal
Highness the Prince Regent being seen standing
between the coffins of Henry VIII and Charles I,
in the royal vault at Windsor.

FAMED for contemptuous breach of sac-
red ties,
By headless Charles see heartless Henry
lies;
Between them stands another sceptred
thing—
It moves, it reigns—in all but name, a
king: 4

Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
—In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and death have mix'd their dust
in vain,
Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
Ah, what can tombs avail!—since these
disgorge
The blood and dust of both—to mould
a George. 10

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

'Expende Annibalem:—quot libras in duce
summo
Invenies?'—JUVENAL, *Sat. x.*

'The Emperor Nepos was acknowledged by the
Senate, by the Italians, and by the Provincials of
Gaul; his moral virtues, and military talents,
were loudly celebrated; and those who derived
any private benefit from his government an-
nounced in prophetic strains the restoration of
public felicity. . . . By this shameful abdication,
he protracted his life a few years, in a very am-
biguous state, between an Emperor and an
Exile, till ———.'—GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*,
vol. vi, p. 220.

'Tis done—but yesterday a King!
And arm'd with Kings to strive—
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject—yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow'd so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestion'd,—power to
save,—
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipp'd thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition's less than littleness!

Thanks for that lesson—It will teach
To after-warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preach'd before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

IV

The triumph and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife—
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife—
All quell'd!—Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

V

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate!
A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

VI

He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound:
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke—
Alone—how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hast done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

VII

The Roman, when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger—dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home—

OCCASIONAL PIECES

He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

VIII

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

But thou—from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung—
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thou canst hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
And thank'd him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain—
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise;
To shame the world again—
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

XII

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make
mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

XIII

And she, proud Austria's mournful
flower,
Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,—
'Tis worth thy vanish'd diadem!

XIV

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile—
It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one—'The world was mine!'—
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth—
So long obey'd—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
While thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

XVII

There was a day—there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

XVIII

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star, the string, the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

I SPEAK not, I trace not, I breathe not
thy name,
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt
in the fame:
But the tear which now burns on my
cheek may impart
The deep thoughts that dwell in that
silence of heart.

Too brief for our passion, too long for
our peace,
Were those hours—can their joy or their
bitterness cease?
We repent, we abjure, we will break from
our chain,—
We will part, we will fly to—unite it
again!

Oh! thine be the gladness, and mine be
the guilt!
Forgive me, adored one!—forsake, if
thou wilt;—
But the heart which is thine shall expire
undebased,
And *man* shall not break it—whatever
thou mayst.

And stern to the haughty, but humble to
thee,
This soul, in its bitterest blackness, shall
be;
And our days seem as swift, and our
moments more sweet,
With thee by my side, than with worlds
at our feet,

One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy
love,
Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or re-
prove;
And the heartless may wonder at all I
resign—
Thy lip shall reply, not to them, but to
mine.

20
May 1814.

ADDRESS INTENDED TO BE RE- CITED AT THE CALEDONIAN MEETING

Who hath not glow'd above the page
where fame
Hath fix'd high Caledon's unconquer'd
name;
The mountain-land which spurn'd the
Roman chain,
And baffled back the fiery-crested Dane,
Whose bright claymore and hardihood
of hand
No foe could tame—no tyrant could
command?
That race is gone—but still their children
breathe,
And glory crowns them with redoubled
wreath:
O'er Gael and Saxon mingling banners
shine,
And, England! add their stubborn
strength to thine.
The blood which flow'd with Wallace
flows as free,
But now 'tis only shed for fame and thee!
Oh! pass not by the northern veteran's
claim,
But give support—the world hath given
him fame!

The humbler ranks, the lowly brave, who
bled
While cheerly following where the mighty
led—
Who sleep beneath the undistinguish'd sod
Where happier comrades in their tri-
umph trod,
To us bequeath—'tis all their fate allows—
The sireless offspring and the lonely
spouse:
She on high Albyn's dusky hills may raise
The tearful eye in melancholy gaze,
Or view, while shadowy auguries disclose
The Highland Seer's anticipated woes,
The bleeding phantom of each martial
form
Dim in the cloud, or darkling in the
storm;
While sad, she chants the solitary song,
The soft lament for him who tarries
long—
For him, whose distant relics vainly crave
The Coronach's wild requiem to the
brave!

'Tis Heaven—not man—must charm
away the woe,
Which bursts when Nature's feelings
newly flow;
Yet tenderness and time may rob the tear
Of half its bitterness for one so dear;
A nation's gratitude perchance may
spread
A thornless pillow for the widow'd head;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

May lighten well her heart's maternal
care,
And wean from penury the soldier's
heir.

May 1814.

FRAGMENT OF AN EPISTLE TO THOMAS MOORE

'WHAT say I?'—not a syllable further in
prose;
I'm your man 'of all measures,' dear
Tom,—so here goes!
Here goes, for a swim on the stream of
old Time,
On those buoyant supporters, the blad-
ders of rhyme.
If our weight breaks them down, and we
sink in the flood,
We are smother'd, at least, in respectable
mud,
Where the Divers of Bathos lie drown'd
in a heap,
And Southey's last Pæan has pillow'd his
sleep;—
That 'Felo de se,' who, half drunk with
his malmsey,
Walk'd out of his depth and was lost in
a calm sea,
Singing 'Glory to God' in a spick and
span stanza,
The like (since Tom Sternhold was
choked) never man saw.

The papers have told you, no doubt,
of the fusses,
The fêtes, and the gapings to get at these
Russes,—
Of his Majesty's suite, up from coach-
man to Hetman,
And what dignity decks the flat face of
the great man.
I saw him, last week, at two balls and a
party,
For a prince, his demeanour was rather
too hearty.
You know we are used to quite different
graces,

The Czar's look, I own, was much
brighter and brisker,
But then he is sadly deficient in whisker;
And wore but a starless blue coat, and in
kersey-
-mere breeches whisk'd round, in a waltz
with the Jersey,
Who lovely as ever, seem'd just as de-
lighted
With Majesty's presence as those she
invited.

June 1814.

CONDOLATORY ADDRESS TO SARAH, COUNTESS OF JERSEY

ON THE PRINCE REGENT'S RETURNING HER
PICTURE TO MRS. MEE

WHEN the vain triumph of the imperial
lord,
Whom servile Rome obey'd, and yet
abhorr'd,
Gave to the vulgar gaze each glorious
bust,
That left a likeness of the brave or
just;
What most admired each scrutinising eye
Of all that deck'd that passing pageantry?
What spread from face to face that
wondering air?
The thought of Brutus—for his was not
there!
That absence proved his worth,—that
absence fix'd
His memory on the longing mind, un-
mix'd;
And more decreed his glory to endure,
Than all a gold Colossus could secure.
If thus, fair Jersey, our desiring gaze
Search for thy form, in vain and mute
amaze,
Amidst those pictured charms, whose
loveliness,
Bright though they be, thine own had
render'd less:
If he, that vain old man, whom truth
admits
Heir of his father's crown, and of his wits,
If his corrupted eye, and wither'd heart,
Could with thy gentle image bear depart;
That tasteless shame be *his*, and ours the
grief,
To gaze on Beauty's band without its
chief:
Yet comfort still one selfish thought
imparts,
We lose the portrait, but preserve our
hearts.
What can his vaulted gallery now
disclose?
A garden with all flowers—except the
rose;—
A fount that only wants its living stream;
A night, with every star, save Dian's
beam.
Lost to our eyes the present forms shall
be,
That turn from tracing them to dream of
thee;
And more on that recall'd resemblance
pause,
Than all he *shall* not force on our
applause.
Long may thy yet meridian lustre
shine,
With all that Virtue asks of Homage
thine:

OCCASIONAL PIECES

The symmetry of youth, the grace of
 mien, 35
 The eye that gladdens, and the brow
 serene;
 The glossy darkness of that clustering
 hair,
 Which shades, yet shows that forehead
 more than fair!
 Each glance that wins us, and the life that
 throws
 A spell which will not let our looks re-
 pose, 40
 But turn to gaze again, and find anew
 Some charm that well rewards another
 view.
 These are not lessen'd, these are still as
 bright,
 Albeit too dazzling for a dotard's sight;
 And those must wait till ev'ry charm is
 gone, 45
 To please the paltry heart that pleases
 none;—
 That dull cold sensualist, whose sickly eye
 In envious dimness pass'd thy portrait by;
 Who rack'd his little spirit to combine
 Its hate of *Freedom's* loveliness, and
 thine. 50

August 1814.

ELEGIAC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF SIR PETER PARKER, BART.

THERE is a tear for all that die,
 A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
 But nations swell the funeral cry,
 And Triumph weeps above the brave.
 For them is Sorrow's purest sigh 5
 O'er Ocean's heaving bosom sent:
 In vain their bones unburied lie,
 All earth becomes their monument!
 A tomb is theirs on every page,
 An epitaph on every tongue: 10
 The present hours, the future age,
 For them bewail, to them belong.
 For them the voice of festal mirth
 Grows hush'd, *their name* the only
 sound;
 While deep Remembrance pours to 15
 Worth
 The goblet's tributary round.
 A theme to crowds that knew them not,
 Lamented by admiring foes,
 Who would not share their glorious lot?
 Who would not die the death they
 chose? 20
 And, gallant Parker! thus enshrined
 Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be;
 And early valour, glowing, find
 A model in thy memory.

But there are breasts that bleed with
 thee 25
 In woe, that glory cannot quell;
 And shuddering hear of victory,
 Where one so dear, so dauntless, fell.
 Where shall they turn to mourn thee less?
 When cease to hear thy cherish'd name?
 Time cannot teach forgetfulness, 31
 While Grief's full heart is fed by Fame.
 Alas! for them, though not for thee,
 They cannot choose but weep the more;
 Deep for the dead the grief must be, 35
 Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before.

October 1814.

TO BELSHAZZAR

BELSHAZZAR! from the banquet turn,
 Nor in thy sensual fulness fall;
 Behold! while yet before thee burn
 The graven words, the glowing wall,
 Many a despot men miscall 5
 Crown'd and anointed from on high;
 But thou, the weakest, worst of all—
 Is it not written, thou must die?
 Go! dash the roses from thy brow—
 Grey hairs but poorly wreath with
 them; 10
 Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
 More than thy very diadem,
 Where thou hast tarnish'd every gem:—
 Then throw the worthless bauble by,
 Which, worn by thee, ev'n slaves con- 15
 temn;
 And learn like better men to die!
 Oh! early in the balance weigh'd,
 And ever light of word and worth,
 Whose soul expired ere youth decay'd,
 And left thee but a mass of earth. 20
 To see thee moves the scorner's mirth:
 But tears in Hope's averted eye
 Lament that even thou hadst birth—
 Unfit to govern, live, or die.

HEBREW MELODIES

ADVERTISEMENT

THE subsequent poems were written at the request of my friend, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, for a Selection of Hebrew Melodies, and have been published, with the music, arranged by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan.
 January, 1815.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
 And all that's best of dark and bright
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
 Thus mellow'd to that tender light
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

II

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-
place.

III

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

THE HARP THE MONARCH MINSTREL SWEPT

I

THE harp the monarch minstrel swept,
The King of men, the loved of Heaven,
Which Music hallow'd while she wept
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given,
Redoubled be her tears, its chords are
riven!
It soften'd men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
That felt not, fired not to the tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his
throne!

It told the triumphs of our King,
It wafted glory to our God;
It made our gladden'd valleys ring,
The cedars bow, the mountains nod;
Its sound aspired to heaven and there
abode!
Since then, though heard on earth no
more,
Devotion and her daughter Love
Still bid the bursting spirit soar
To sounds that seem as from above,
In dreams that day's broad light can
not remove.

IF THAT HIGH WORLD

I

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherish'd heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears—
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy light—Eternity!

II

It must be so: 'tis not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And 'striving to o'erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to Being's severing link.
Oh! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares;
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!

THE WILD GAZELLE

I

THE wild gazelle on Judah's hills
Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
That gush on holy ground:
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by:—

II

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
Hath Judah witness'd there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
Inhabitants more fair.
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone!

III

More blest each palm that shades those
plains
Than Israel's scatter'd race;
For, taking root, it there remains
In solitary grace:
It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

But we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
Our own may never lie:
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

OH! WEEP FOR THOSE

I

OH! weep for those that wept by Babel's
stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a
dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken
shell;
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt the
godless dwell!

II

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding
feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem
sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly
voice?

OCCASIONAL PIECES

III

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave!

ON JORDAN'S BANKS

I

ON Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep—
Yet there—even there—Oh God! thy thunders sleep:

II

There—where thy finger scorch'd the tablet stone!
There—where thy shadow to thy people shone!
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself—none living see and not expire!

III

Oh! in the lightning let thy glance appear;
Sweep from his shiver'd hand the oppressor's spear!
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod?
How long thy temple worshipless, Oh God?

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

I

SINCE our Country, our God—Oh, my Sire!
Demand that thy Daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow—
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now!

II

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow!

III

And of this, oh, my Father! be sure—
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

IV

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent!
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my Father and Country are free!

V

When this blood of thy giving hath gush'd,
When the voice that thou lovest is hush'd,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!

OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

I

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

II

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd
the dead!

III

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

MY SOUL IS DARK

I

My soul is dark—Oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain.

II

But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let thy notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst;
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence long;
And now 'tis doom'd to know the worst,
And break at once—or yield to song.

I SAW THEE WEEP

I

I SAW thee weep—the big bright tear
Came o'er that eye of blue;
And then methought it did appear
A violet dropping dew;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

I saw thee smile—the sapphire's blaze
Beside thee ceased to shine;
It could not match the living rays
That fill'd that glance of thine.

II

As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky,
Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
That lightens o'er the heart.

THY DAYS ARE DONE

I

THY days are done, thy fame begun;
Thy country's strains record
The triumphs of her chosen Son,
The slaughters of his sword!
The deeds he did, the fields he won,
The freedom he restored!

Though thou art fall'n, while we are free
Thou shalt not taste of death!
The generous blood that flow'd from thee
Disdain'd to sink beneath:
Within our veins its currents be,
Thy spirit on our breath!

III

Thy name, our charging hosts along,
Shall be the battle-word!
Thy fall, the theme of choral song
From virgin voices pour'd!
To weep would do thy glory wrong:
Thou shalt not be deplored.

SAUL

I

THOU whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear,
'Samuel, raise thy buried head!
King, behold the phantom seer!'
Earth yawn'd; he stood the centre of a
cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his
shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye;
His hand was wither'd, and his veins were
dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glitter'd there,
Shrunk and sinewless, and ghastly bare;
From lips that moved not and unbreath-
ing frame,
Like cavern'd winds, the hollow accents
came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunder-
stroke.

II

'Why is my sleep disquieted? 15
Who is he that calls the dead?
Is it thou, O King? Behold,
Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
Such are mine; and such shall be
Thine to-morrow, when with me:
Ere the coming day is done, 21
Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
Fare thee well, but for a day,
Then we mix our mouldering clay.
Thou, thy race, lie pale and low, 25
Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
And the falchion by thy side
To thy heart thy hand shall guide:
Crownless, breathless, headless fall,
Son and sire, the house of Saul!' 30

SONG OF SAUL BEFORE HIS LAST BATTLE

I

WARRIORS and chiefs! should the shaft or
the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in
your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

II

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from
the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not
to meet.

III

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day!

'ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER'

I

FAME, wisdom, love, and power were mine,
And health and youth possess'd me;
My goblets blush'd from every vine,
And lovely forms caress'd me;
I sunn'd my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

II

I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
Of pleasure unembitter'd;
And not a trapping deck'd my power
That gall'd not while it glitter'd.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

III

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath power of charming?
It will not list to wisdom's lore,
Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY

I

WHEN coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

II

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth or skies display'd,
Shall it survey, shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears.

III

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the furthest heaven had birth,
The spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
Fix'd in its own eternity.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
It lives all passionless and pure:
An age shall fleet like earthly year;
Its years as moments shall endure.
Away, away, without a wing,
O'er all, through all, its thought shall
fly,
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

THE King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall:
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.

A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!

II

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

III

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.
'Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.'

IV

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

V

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright.
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
The morrow proved it true.

VI

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!'

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS!

SUN of the sleepless! melancholy star!
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously
far,
That show'st the darkness thou canst not
dispel,
How like art thou to joy remember'd well!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

So gleams the past, the light of other
days,
Which shines, but warms not with its⁵
powerless rays;
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant—clear—but, oh how
cold!

WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS
THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE

I

WERE my bosom as false as thou deem'st
it to be,
I need not have wander'd from far Galilee;
It was but abjuring my creed to efface
The curse which, thou say'st, is the crime
of my race.

II

If the bad never triumph, then God is with
thee!
If the slave only sin, thou art spotless
and free!
If the Exile on earth is an Outcast on high,
Live on in thy faith, but in mine I will die.

III

I have lost for that faith more than thou
canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper
doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope—
and in thine
The land and the life which for him I
resign.

HEROD'S LAMENT FOR MARIAMNE

I

OH, Mariamne! now for thee
The heart for which thou bled'st is
bleeding;
Revenge is lost in agony,
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh, Mariamne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading:
Ah! could'st thou—thou would'st pardon
now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer un-
heeding.

II

And is she dead?—and did they dare
Obey my frenzy's jealous raving?
My wrath but doom'd my own despair:
The sword that smote her's o'er me
waving.—
But thou art cold, my murder'd love!
And this dark heart is vainly craving
For her who soars alone above,
And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

III

She's gone, who shared my diadem;
She sunk, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem,
Whose leaves for me alone were bloom-
ing;
And mine's the guilt, and mine the hell,
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earn'd those tortures well,
Which unconsumed are still consum-
ing!

ON THE DAY OF THE DESTRUC- TION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS

I

FROM the last hill that looks on thy once
holy dome,
I beheld thee, oh Sion! when render'd to
Rome:
'Twas thy last sun went down, and the
flames of thy fall
Flash'd back on the last glance I gave to
thy wall.

II

I look'd for thy temple, I look'd for my
home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to
come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy
fane,
And the fast-fetter'd hands that made
vengeance in vain.

III

On many an eve, the high spot whence I
gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it
blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld
the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone
on thy shrine.

And now on that mountain I stood on
that day,
But I mark'd not the twilight beam melt-
ing away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared
in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the con-
queror's head!

But the gods of the Pagan shall never pro-
fane
The shrine where Jehovah disdain'd not
to reign;
And scatter'd and scorn'd as thy people
may be,
Our worship, oh Father! is only for thee.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON WE SAT DOWN AND WEPT

I

We sat down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey;
And ye, oh her desolate daughters!
Were scatter'd all weeping away.

II

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which roll'd on in freedom below,
They demanded the song: but, oh never
That triumph the stranger shall know!
May this right hand be wither'd for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

On the willow that harp is suspended,
Oh Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
But left me that token of thee:
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
With the voice of the spoiler by me!

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

I

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

II

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer
is green,
That host with their banners at sunset
were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and
strown.

III

For the Angel of Death spread his wings
on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he
pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly
and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for
ever grew still!

IV

And there lay the steed with his nostril
all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath
of his pride;

And the foam of his gasping lay white on
the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating
surf.

V

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust
on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners
alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

VI

And the widows of Ashur are loud in
their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of
Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote
by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the
Lord!

A SPIRIT PASS'D BEFORE ME

FROM JOB

I

A SPIRIT pass'd before me: I beheld
The face of immortality unveil'd—
Deep sleep came down on every eye save
mine—
And there it stood,—all formless—but
divine:
Along my bones the creeping flesh did
quake;
And as my damp hair stiffen'd, thus it
spake:

II

'Is man more just than God? Is man more
pure
Than he who deems even Seraphs in-
secure?
Creatures of clay—vain dwellers in the
dust!
The moth survives you, and are ye more
just?
Things of a day! you wither ere the night,
Heedless and blind to Wisdom's wasted
light!'

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming: 5

OCCASIONAL PIECES

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

'O Lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentum ortus ex animo: quater
Felix! in limo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.'
GRAY'S *Poemata*.

THERE's not a joy the world can give like
that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines
in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the
blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere
youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the
wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or
ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or
only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall
never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like
death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not
dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the foun-
tain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis
where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips,
and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no
more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd
turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but
worn and grey beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what
I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept o'er
many a vanish'd scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet,
all brackish though they be,
So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those
tears would flow to me.

March 1815.

ON NAPOLEON'S ESCAPE FROM ELBA

ONCE fairly set out on his party of pleasure,
Taking towns at his liking, and crowns
at his leisure,
From Elba to Lyons and Paris he goes,
Making balls for the ladies, and bows to
his foes.

March 27, 1815.

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

I

WE do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 'twas shed, but is not sunk—
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion—
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost Labeledoyère—
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the 'bravest of the brave,'
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 'tis full 'twill burst asunder—
Never yet was heard such thunder
As then shall shake the world with won-
der—
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

II

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men—
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son—
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell:—so perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

III

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks,
Like a stream which burst its banks,
Why helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

FROM THE FRENCH

I

Shone and shiver'd fast around thee—
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low 50
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once—as the moon sways o'er the tide,
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight, 55
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy,—
And, as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was
quickest, 60
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagle's burning crest—
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest— 65
Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was Murat charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again! 70

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch—
But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword, 75
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The 'moral lesson' dearly bought—
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause—
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though guilt would sweep it from the
earth; 86
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter! 90

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion—
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued—
Man may die—the soul's renew'd: 96
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit—
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble—
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

MUST thou go, my glorious Chief,
Sever'd from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief,
Maddening o'er that long adieu?
Woman's love, and friendship's zeal,
Dear as both have been to me—
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?

II

Idol of the soldier's soul!
First in fight, but mightiest now;
Many could a world control;
Thee alone no doom can bow.
By thy side for years I dared
Death; and envied those who fell,
When their dying shout was heard,
Blessing him they served so well.

Would that I were cold with those,
Since this hour I live to see;
When the doubts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee,
Dreading each should set thee free!
Oh! although in dungeons pent,
All their chains were light to me,
Gazing on thy soul unbent. 75

IV

Would the sycophants of him
Now so deaf to duty's prayer,
Were his borrow'd glories dim,
In his native darkness share?
Were that world this hour his own,
All thou calmly dost resign,
Could he purchase with that throne
Hearts like those which still are thine?

My chief, my king, my friend, adieu!
Never did I droop before;
Never to my sovereign sue,
As his foes I now implore:
All I ask is to divide
Every peril he must brave;
Sharing by the hero's side
His fall, his exile, and his grave.

ON THE STAR OF 'THE LEGION OF HONOUR'

[FROM THE FRENCH]

STAR of the brave!—whose beam hath
shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead—
Thou radiant and adored deceit!
Which millions rush'd in arms to greet,
Wild meteor of immortal birth; 5
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Souls of slain heroes form'd thy rays;
Eternity flash'd through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here; 10
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a volcano of the skies.

Like lava roll'd thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rock'd beneath thee to her base,
As thou didst lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, each divine, 20
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom's hand had blended them,
Like tints in an immortal gem.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes; 25
One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes;
One, the pure Spirit's veil of white
Had robed in radiance of its light:
The three so mingled did beseech
The texture of a heavenly dream. 30

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale,
And darkness must again prevail!
But, oh thou Rainbow of the free!
Our tears and blood must flow for thee.
When thy bright promise fades away, 35
Our life is but a load of clay.

And Freedom hallows with her tread
The silent cities of the dead;
For beautiful in death are they
Who proudly fall in her array; 40
And soon, oh Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them or thee!

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL

[FROM THE FRENCH]

FAREWELL to the Land where the gloom
of my Glory
Arose and o'ershadow'd the earth with
her name—
She abandons me now—but the page of
her story,
The brightest or blackest, is fill'd with my
fame.
I have warr'd with a world which van-
quish'd me only
When the meteor of conquest allured me
too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread
me thus lonely,
The last single Captive to millions in war.

II

Farewell to thee, France! when thy dia-
dem crown'd me,
I made thee the gem and the wonder of
earth,
But thy weakness decrees I should leave
as I found thee,
Decay'd in thy glory, and sunk in thy
worth.
Oh! for the veteran hearts that were
wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles
were won—
Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that mo-
ment was blasted,
Had still soar'd with eyes fix'd on victory's
sun!

III

Farewell to thee, France!—but when
Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me
then,—
The violet still grows in the depth of thy
valleys;
Though wither'd, thy tear will unfold it
again—
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that sur-
round us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my
voice—
There are links which must break in the
chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of
thy choice!

DOMESTIC PIECES

1816

FARE THEE WELL

'Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain;

But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining;
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.'
COLERIDGE'S *Christabel*.

FARE thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well!
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain. 6
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:

OCCASIONAL PIECES

A SKETCH

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show! 10
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend
thee—
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee, 15
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound? 20

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own life retaineth, 25
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is—that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead; 30
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father!' 35
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless
thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd! 40

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me. 44

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with thee they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken; 49
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 'tis done—all words are idle—
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will. 55

Fare thee well! thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die. 60

March 17, 1816.

'Honest—honest Iago!
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.'
SHAKESPEARE.

BORN in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next—for some gracious service un-
express'd,

And from its wages only to be guess'd—
Raised from the toilette to the table,—
where 5

Her wondering betters wait behind her
chair.

With eye unmoved, and forehead un-
abash'd,
She dines from off the plate she lately
wash'd.

Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie,
The genial confidante, and general spy,
Who could, ye gods! her next employ-
ment guess— 11

An only infant's earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught
so well,

That she herself, by teaching, learn'd to
spell.

An adept next in penmanship she grows,
As many a nameless slander deftly shows:
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know—but that high Soul secured
the heart.

And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foil'd was perversion by that youthful
mind, 21

Which Flattery fool'd not, Baseness could
not blind,

Deceit infect not, near Contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil,
Nor master'd Science tempt her to look
down 25

On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor
Passion bow,

Nor virtue teach austerity—till now. 30
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness—to for-
give,

Too shock'd at faults her soul can never
know,
She deems that all could be like her be-
low:

Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would
amend. 36

But to the theme, now laid aside too
long,

The baleful burthen of this honest song,
Though all her former functions are no
more,

She rules the circle which she served before.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

If mothers—none know why—before her
quake;
If daughters dread her for the mothers' ⁴¹
sake;
If early habits—those false links, which
bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest
mind—
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will; ⁴⁶
If like a snake she steal within your
walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she
crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not
find;
What marvel that this hag of hatred works ⁵⁰
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she
dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
Skill'd by a touch to deepen scandal's
tints ⁵⁵
With all the kind mendacity of hints,
While mingling truth with falsehood,
sneers with smiles,
A thread of candour with a web of
wiles;
A plain blunt show of briefly-spoken
seeming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul-
harden'd scheming; ⁶⁰
A lip of lies; a face form'd to conceal,
And, without feeling, mock at all who
feel:
With a vile mask the Gorgon would dis-
own,—
A cheek of parchment, and an eye of
stone.
Mark, how the channels of her yellow
blood ⁶⁵
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to
mud,
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's
scale—
(For drawn from reptiles only may we
trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face)—
Look on her features! and behold her
mind ⁷¹
As in a mirror of itself defined:
Look on the picture! deem it not o'er-
charged—
There is no trait which might not be en-
larged:
Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who
made ⁷⁵
This monster when their mistress left off
trade—
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or
die.

Oh! wretch without a tear—without a
thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast
wrought— ⁸⁰
The time shall come, nor long remote,
when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflict
now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crush'd affections
light ⁸⁵
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!
And make thee in thy leprosy of mind
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind!
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black—as thy will for others would cre-
ate; ⁹⁰
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,
The widow'd couch of fire, that thou hast
spread!
Then, when thou fain wouldst weary
Heaven with prayer, ⁹⁵
Look on thine earthly victims—and des-
pair!
Down to the dust!—and, as thou rott'st
away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous
clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would
tear— ¹⁰⁰
Thy name—thy human name—to every eye
The climax of all scorn should hang on
high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorr'd compeers—
And festering in the infamy of years.

March 29, 1816.

ENDORSEMENT TO THE DEED OF SEPARATION

IN THE APRIL OF 1816

A YEAR ago, you swore, fond she!
'To love, to honour,' and so forth:
Such was the vow you pledged to me,
And here's exactly what 'tis worth.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

I

WHEN all around grew drear and dark,
And reason half withheld her ray—
And hope but shed a dying spark
Which more misled my lonely way;

In that deep midnight of the mind,
And that internal strife of heart,
When dreading to be deem'd too kind,
The weak despair—the cold depart;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

III

When fortune changed—and love fled far,
And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
Which rose and set not to the last.

IV

Oh! blest be thine unbroken light!
That watch'd me as a seraph's eye,
And stood between me and the night,
For ever shining sweetly nigh.

And when the cloud upon us came,
Which strove to blacken o'er thy ray—
Then purer spread its gentle flame,
And dash'd the darkness all away.

VI

Still may thy spirit dwell on mine,
And teach it what to brave or brook—
There's more in one soft word of thine
Than in the world's defied rebuke.

VII

Thou stood'st, as stands a lovely tree,
That still unbroke, though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.

VIII

The winds might rend—the skies might
pour,
But there thou wert—and still wouldst
be
Devoted in the stormiest hour
To shed thy weeping leaves o'er me.

IX

But thou and thine shall know no blight,
Whatever fate on me may fall;
For heaven in sunshine will requite
The kind—and thee the most of all.

Then let the ties of baffled love
Be broken—thine will never break;
Thy heart can feel—but will not move;
Thy soul, though soft, will never shake.

XI

And these, when all was lost beside,
Were found and still are fix'd in thee;—
And bearing still a breast so tried,
Earth is no desert—ev'n to me.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;

Though thy soul with my grief was ac-
quainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the
ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is
shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not con-
tern;
They may torture, but shall not subdue
me;
'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forbores't to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst
shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one;
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

VI

From the wreck of the past, which hath
perish'd,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most
cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

July 24, 1816.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

I

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be
thine;
Mountains and seas divide us, but I
claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer
mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the
same—
A loved regret which I would not re-
sign,
There yet are two things in my des-
tiny,—
A world to roam through, and a home
with thee.

II

The first were nothing—had I still the
last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou
hast,
And mine is not the wish to make
them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's,
and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate
of yore,—
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

III

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly
shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to
screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

IV

Mine were my faults, and mine be their
reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the
day
That gave me being, gave me that which
marr'd
The gift,—a fate, or will, that walk'd
astray;
And I at times have found the struggle
hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds
of clay:
But now I fain would for a time sur-
vive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

V

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have
roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something—I know not what—does
still uphold
A spirit of slight patience;—not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase
pain.

VI

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me—or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,—
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,
(For even to this may change of soul
refer,
And with light armour we may learn to
bear.)
Have taught me a strange quiet, which
was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

VII

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers,
and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to
books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their
looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love—but none like
thee.

VIII

Here are the Alpine landscapes which
create
A fund for contemplation;—to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes
inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most
desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

IX

Oh that thou wert but with me!—but
I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may
show;—
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no
more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer
shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory
make,
Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes
before;
Though, like all things which I have
loved, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will
comply—
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall
be
My sister—till I look again on thee.

XII

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not;—for at length I
see
Such scenes as those wherein my life
began.
The earliest—even the only paths for
me—
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to
shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would
have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and *thou* hadst not
wept.

XIII

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with
Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with
me grew,
And made me all which they can make
—a name.
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over—I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone be-
fore.

XIV

And for the future, this world's future
may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that
were;

My years have been no slumber, but
the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a cen-
tury,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

XV

And for the remnant which may be to
come
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless,—for within the crowded
sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would
steal,
And for the present, I would not be-
numb
My feelings further.—Nor shall I con-
ceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought pro-
found.

XVI

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy
heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are—I am, even as thou
art—
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow
decline
We are entwined—let death come slow
or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the
last!

THE DREAM

OUR life is two-fold: Sleep hath its own
world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own
world,
And a wide realm of wild reality.
And dreams in their development have
breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of
joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking
thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking
toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity; ¹¹
They pass like spirits of the past,—they
speak
Like Sibyls of the future: they have
power—
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

They make us what we were not—what
 they will, ¹⁵
 And shake us with the vision that's gone
 by,
 The dread of vanish'd shadows—Are they
 so?
 Is not the past all shadow?—What are
 they?
 Creations of the mind?—The mind can
 make
 Substance, and people planets of its own
 With beings brighter than have been, and
 give ²¹
 A breath to forms which can outlive all
 flesh.
 I would recall a vision which I dream'd
 Perchance in sleep—for in itself a thought,
 A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
 And curdles a long life into one hour.

II

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
 Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
 Green and of mild declivity, the last
 As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
 Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
 But a most living landscape, and the wave
 Of woods and corn-fields, and the abodes
 of men ³³
 Scatter'd at intervals, and wreathing
 smoke
 Arising from such rustic roofs;—the hill
 Was crown'd with a peculiar diadem ³⁶
 Of trees, in circular array, so fix'd,
 Not by the sport of nature, but of man:
 These two, a maiden and a youth, were
 there ³⁹
 Gazing—the one on all that was beneath
 Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her;
 And both were young, and one was beautiful:
 And both were young—yet not alike in
 youth.
 As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,
 The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
 The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
 Had far outgrown his years, and to his
 eye ⁴⁷
 There was but one beloved face on earth,
 And that was shining on him: he had
 look'd
 Upon it till it could not pass away; ⁵⁰
 He had no breath, no being, but in hers;
 She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
 But trembled on her words; she was his
 sight,
 For his eye follow'd hers, and saw with
 hers,
 Which colour'd all his objects:—he had
 ceased ⁵⁵
 To live within himself; she was his life,
 The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
 Which terminated all: upon a tone,

A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and
 flow,
 And his cheek change tempestuously—
 his heart ⁶⁰
 Unknowing of its cause of agony.
 But she in these fond feelings had no share:
 Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
 Even as a brother—but no more; 'twas
 much,
 For brotherless she was, save in the name
 Her infant friendship had bestow'd on
 him; ⁶⁶
 Herself the solitary scion left
 Of a time-honour'd race.—It was a name
 Which pleased him, and yet pleased him
 not—and why?
 Time taught him a deep answer—when
 she loved ⁷⁰
 Another; even *now* she loved another,
 And on the summit of that hill she stood
 Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
 Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

III

A change came o'er the spirit of my
 dream. ⁷⁵
 There was an ancient mansion, and before
 Its walls there was a steed caparison'd;
 Within an antique Oratory stood
 The Boy of whom I spake;—he was alone,
 And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon
 He sat him down, and seized a pen, and
 traced ⁸¹
 Words which I could not guess of; then
 he lean'd
 His bow'd head on his hands, and shook
 as 'twere
 With a convulsion—then arose again,
 And with his teeth and quivering hands
 did tear ⁸⁵
 What he had written, but he shed no tears,
 And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
 Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,
 The Lady of his love re-entered there;
 She was serene and smiling then, and yet
 She knew she was by him beloved,—she
 knew, ⁹¹
 For quickly comes such knowledge, that
 his heart
 Was darken'd with her shadow, and she
 saw
 That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
 He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
 He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
 A tablet of unutterable thoughts ⁹⁷
 Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;
 He dropp'd the hand he held, and with
 slow steps
 Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,
 For they did part with mutual smiles; he
 pass'd ¹⁰¹
 From out the massy gate of that old Hall,

And mounting on his steed he went his way;
And ne'er repass'd that hoary threshold more.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his soul drank their sunbeams: he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer.
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couch'd among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names
Of those who rear'd them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fasten'd near a fountain; and a man
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumber'd around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in heaven.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better:—in her home,
A thousand leagues from his,—her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,
Daughters and sons of Beauty,—but behold!
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be?—she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,
Or ill-repress'd affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be?—she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which prey'd
Upon her mind—a spectre of the past.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was return'd.—I saw him stand
Before an Altar—with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood;—as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The self-same aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then—
As in that hour—a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced,—and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reel'd around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been—
But the old mansion, and the accustom'd hall,
And the remember'd chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny,—came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light:
What business had they there at such a time?

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love:—Oh! she was changed
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wander'd from its dwelling, and her eyes
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become
The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight familiar were to hers.
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth?
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

A change came o'er the spirit of my
dream.

The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were
gone, 186

Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compass'd
round

With Hatred and Contention; Pain was
mix'd 189

In all which was served up to him, until,
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to
many men,

And made him friends of mountains;
with the stars 195

And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues; and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;
To him the book of Night was open'd
wide,

And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd
A marvel and a secret—Be it so. 201

My dream was past; it had no further
change.

It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus
traced out

Almost like a reality—the one 205
To end in madness—both in misery.

July 1816.

LINES ON HEARING THAT LADY BYRON WAS ILL

AND thou wert sad—yet I was not with
thee;

And thou wert sick, and yet I was not
near;

Methought that joy and health alone
could be

Where I was *not*—and pain and sorrow
here!

And is it thus?—it is as I foretold, 5
And shall be more so; for the mind
recoils

Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies
cold,

While heaviness collects the shatter'd
spoils.

It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no
more, 10

But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.

I am too well avenged!—but 'twas my right;
Whate'er my sins might be, *thou* wert
not sent

To be the Nemesis who should requite—
Nor did Heaven choose so near an
instrument. 16

Mercy is for the merciful!—if thou
Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.
Thy nights are banish'd from the realms
of sleep!—

Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou
shalt feel 20

A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must
reap

The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could de-
fend, 26

And be avenged, or turn them into
friend;

But thou in safe implacability
Hast nought to dread—in thy own
weakness shielded,

And in my love, which hath but too much
yielded, 30

And spared, for thy sake, some I should
not spare;

And thus upon the world—trust in thy
truth,

And the wild fame of my ungovern'd
youth—

On things that were not, and on things
that are— 34

Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been
guilt!

The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected
sword,

Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better
life,

Which, but for this cold treason of thy
heart, 40

Might still have risen from out the grave
of strife,

And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,

Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future
gold— 45

And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,

The earthly truth, which was thy proper
praise,

Did not still walk beside thee—but at
times,

And with a breast unknowing its own
crimes, 50

Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which
dwell

In Janus-spirits—the significant eye

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Which learns to lie with silence—the pre-
text ⁵⁴

Of prudence, with advantages annex'd—
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end—

All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is
won—

I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

September 1816.

DARKNESS

I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the
stars

Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moon-
less air; ⁵

Morn came and went—and came, and
brought no day,

And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires—and the
thrones, ¹⁰

The palaces of crowned kings—the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were con-
sumed,

And men were gather'd round their blaz-
ing homes

To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the
eye ¹⁶

Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour
They fell and faded—and the crackling
trunks ²⁰

Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was
black.

The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits

The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some
did rest ²⁵

Their chins upon their clenched hands,
and smiled;

And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up

With mad disquietude on the dull sky, ²⁹
The pall of a past world; and then again

With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the
wild birds shriek'd

And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest
brutes

Came tame and tremulous; and vipers
crawl'd ³⁵

And twined themselves among the multi-
tude,

Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for
food.

And War, which for a moment was no
more,

Did glut himself again:—a meal was
bought

With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was
left; ⁴¹

All earth was but one thought—and that
was death

Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails—men

Died, and their bones were tombless as
their flesh; ⁴⁵

The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save
one,

And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men
at bay,

Till hunger clung them, or the dropping
dead ⁵⁰

Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out
no food,

But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand

Which answer'd not with a caress—he
died.

The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but
two ⁵⁵

Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside

The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy
things

For an unholy usage; they raked up, ⁶⁰
And shivering scraped with their cold
skeleton hands

The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame

Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld

Each other's aspects—saw, and shriek'd,
and died— ⁶⁶

Even of their mutual hideousness they
died,

Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world
was void,

The populous and the powerful was a
lump, ⁷⁰

Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless,
lifeless,

A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,

And nothing stirr'd within their silent
depths;

Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea, ⁷⁵
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as
they dropp'd

They slept on the abyss without a surge—
The waves were dead; the tides were in
their grave,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

The moon, their mistress, had expired
before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant
air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had
no need
Of aid from them—She was the Universe.

Diodati, July 1816.

MONODY ON THE DEATH

OF

THE RIGHT HON. R. B. SHERIDAN

SPOKEN AT DRURY-LANE THEATRE

WHEN the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and
awes
While Nature makes that melancholy
pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge
where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sub-
lime,
Who hath not shared that calm, so still
and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not
speak but weep,
A holy concord, and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow, but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness, but full and clear,
A sweet dejection, a transparent tear,
Unmix'd with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame, and secret without
pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instils
When Summer's day declines along the
hills,
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed—a Power
Hath pass'd from day to darkness—to
whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeath'd—no
name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit, the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song, the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun, but still have left be-
hind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind;
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous
whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling
soul,

Which all embraced, and lighten'd over
all,
To cheer, to pierce, to please, or to appal.
From the charm'd council to the festive
board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised, the proud, who made his
praise their pride.
When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath—the delegated voice of God!
Which shook the nations through his lips,
and blazed
Till vanquish'd senates trembled as they
praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all
young and warm,
The gay creations of his spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue, the deathless wit,
Which knew not what it was to intermit;
The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that
bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which
they spring;
These wondrous beings of his fancy,
wrought
To fulness by the fiat of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may
meet,
Bright with the hues of his Promethean
heat;
A halo of the light of other days,
Which still the splendour of its orb be-
trays.

But should there be to whom the fatal
blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
Men who exult when minds of heavenly
tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause—ah! little do they
know
That what to them seem'd Vice might be
but Woe.
Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fix'd for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel, accuser, judge, and spy,
The foe, the fool, the jealous, and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others'
pain,
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the truth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the pyramid of Calumny!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

CHURCHILL'S GRAVE

A FACT LITERALLY RENDERED

These are his portion—but if join'd to these

Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,⁸⁰

If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,

To soothe Indignity—and face to face
Meet sordid Rage, and wrestle with Disgrace,

To find in Hope but the renew'd caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness:—⁸⁶

If such may be the ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given

Bear hearts electric—charged with fire
from Heaven,⁹⁰

Black with the rude collision, inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,

Driven o'er the lowering atmosphere that nurst

Thoughts which have turn'd to thunder—
scorch, and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene⁹⁵

Such things should be—if such have ever been;

Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanish'd beam, and add our mite⁹⁹

Of praise in payment of a long delight.
Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,

Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three*!

Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's muse is dear,¹⁰⁵

He was your Master—emulate him *here*!

Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother—bear his ashes hence!

While Powers of mind almost of boundless range,

Complete in kind, as various in their change,¹¹⁰

While Eloquence, Wit, Poesy, and Mirth,
That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,

Survive within our souls—while lives our

Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness, long in vain,¹¹⁵

And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that nature form'd but one such man,

And broke the die—in moulding Sheridan!

Diodati, July 17, 1816.

I stood beside the grave of him who blazed

The comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed

With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,

With name no clearer than the names unknown,⁶

Which lay unread around it; and I ask'd
The Gardener of that ground, why it might be

That for this plant strangers his memory task'd,

Through the thick deaths of half a century?

And thus he answer'd—'Well, I do not know

Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;

He died before my day of Sextonship,
And I had not the digging of this grave.'

And is this all? I thought—and do we rip
The veil of Immortality, and crave

I know not what of honour and of light
Through unborn ages, to endure this blight,¹⁸

So soon, and so successful? As I said,
The Architect of all on which we tread,

For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay,
To extricate remembrance from the clay,

Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought,

Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers;—as he caught,²⁵

As 'twere the twilight of a former Sun,
Thus spoke he,—'I believe the man of whom

You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
Was a most famous writer in his day,

And therefore travellers step from out their way³⁰

To pay him honour,—and myself what'er
Your honour pleases:—'then most pleased I shook

From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver, which as 'twere

Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare³⁵

So much but inconveniently:—Ye smile,
I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,

Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.

You are the fools, not I—for I did dwell
With a deep thought, and with a soften'd eye,⁴⁰

On that Old Sexton's natural homily,
In which there was Obscurity and Fame—

The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

Diodati, 1816.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

PROMETHEUS

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
 The sufferings of mortality,
 Seen in their sad reality,
 Were not as things that gods despise;
 What was thy pity's recompense?
 A silent suffering, and intense;
 The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
 All that the proud can feel of pain,
 The agony they do not show,
 The suffocating sense of woe,
 Which speaks but in its loneliness,
 And then is jealous lest the sky
 Should have a listener, nor will sigh
 Until its voice is echoless.

II

Titan! to thee the strife was given
 Between the suffering and the will,
 Which torture where they cannot kill;
 And the inexorable Heaven,
 And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
 The ruling principle of Hate,
 Which for its pleasure doth create
 The things it may annihilate,
 Refused thee even the boon to die:
 The wretched gift eternity
 Was thine—and thou hast borne it well.
 All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
 Was but the menace which flung back
 On him the torments of thy rack;
 The fate thou didst so well foresee,
 But would not to appease him tell;
 And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
 And in his Soul a vain repentance,
 And evil dread so ill dissembled,
 That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

III

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
 To render with thy precepts less
 The sum of human wretchedness,
 And strengthen Man with his own mind;
 But baffled as thou wert from high,
 Still in thy patient energy,
 In the endurance, and repulse
 Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
 Which Earth and Heaven could not con-
 vulse,
 A mighty lesson we inherit:
 Thou art a symbol and a sign
 To Mortals of their fate and force;
 Like thee, Man is in part divine,
 A troubled stream from a pure source;
 And Man in portions can foresee
 His own funereal destiny;
 His wretchedness, and his resistance,
 And his sad unallied existence:
 To which his Spirit may oppose
 Itself—and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,

Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concenter'd recompense,
 Triumphant where it dares defy,
 And making Death a Victory.
 Diodati, July 1816.

A FRAGMENT

COULD I remount the river of my years.
 To the first fountain of our smiles and
 tears,
 I would not trace again the stream of
 hours
 Between their outworn banks of wither'd
 flowers,
 But bid it flow as now—until it glides
 Into the number of the nameless tides.

What is this Death?—a quiet of the heart?
 The whole of that of which we are a part?
 For life is but a vision—what I see
 Of all which lives alone is life to me,
 And being so—the absent are the dead,
 Who haunt us from tranquillity, and
 spread
 A dreary shroud around us, and invest
 With sad remembrances our hours of rest.
 The absent are the dead—for they are
 cold,
 And ne'er can be what once we did behold;
 And they are changed, and cheerless,—
 or if yet
 The forgotten do not all forget,
 Since thus divided—equal must it be
 If the deep barrier be of earth, or sea;
 It may be both—but one day end it must
 In the dark union of insensate dust.

The under-earth inhabitants—are they
 But mingled millions decomposed to clay?
 The ashes of a thousand ages spread
 Wherever man has trodden or shall tread?
 Or do they in their silent cities dwell
 Each in his incommunicative cell?
 Or have they their own language? and a
 sense
 Of breathless being?—darken'd and in-
 tense
 As midnight in her solitude?—Oh Earth!
 Where are the past?—and wherefore had
 they birth?
 The dead are thy inheritors—and we
 But bubbles on thy surface; and the
 key
 Of thy profundity is in the grave,
 The ebon portal of thy peopled cave,
 Where I would walk in spirit, and behold
 Our elements resolved to things untold,
 And fathom hidden wonders, and ex-
 plore
 The essence of great bosoms now no
 more.

Diodati, July 1816.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

SONNET TO LAKE LEMAN

ROUSSEAU—Voltaire—our Gibbon—and
De Staël—

Leman! these names are worthy of thy
shore,

Thy shore of names like these! wert
thou no more

Their memory thy remembrance would
recall:

To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for
the lore

Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall

Where dwell the wise and wondrous;
but by *thee*

How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we
feel,

In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,

Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory
real!

Diodati, July 1816.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

I

BRIGHT be the place of thy soul!

No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control,
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine

When we know that thy God is with
thee.

II

Light be the turf of thy tomb!

May its verdure like emeralds be!
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree

May spring from the spot of thy rest:

But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

A VERY MOURNFUL BALLAD ON THE SIEGE AND CONQUEST OF ALHAMA

*Which, in the Arabic language, is to the
following purport*

THE Moorish King rides up and down,
Through Granada's royal town;
From Elvira's gate to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Letters to the monarch tell

How Alhama's city fell:

In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

III

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;

Through the street of Zacatin

To the Alhambra spurring in.

Woe is me, Alhama!

IV

When the Alhambra walls he gain'd,
On the moment he ordain'd

That the trumpet straight should sound

With the silver clarion round.

Woe is me, Alhama!

And when the hollow drums of war

Beat the loud alarm afar,

That the Moors of town and plain

Might answer to the martial strain.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Then the Moors, by this aware,

That bloody Mars recall'd them there,

One by one, and two by two,

To a mighty squadron grew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

VII

Out then spake an aged Moor

In these words the king before,

'Wherefore call on us, oh King?

What may mean this gathering?'

Woe is me, Alhama!

'Friends! ye have, alas! to know

Of a most disastrous blow;

That the Christians, stern and bold,

Have obtain'd Alhama's hold.'

Woe is me, Alhama!

IX

Out then spake old Alfaqui,

With his beard so white to see,

'Good King! thou art justly served,

Good King! this thou hast deserved.

Woe is me, Alhama!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

'By thee were slain, in evil hour,
The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
And strangers were received by thee
Of Cordova the Chivalry.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XI
'And for this, oh King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement:
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XII
'He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIII
Fire flash'd from out the old Moor's eyes,
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answer'd, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIV
'There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings:'—
Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XV
Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui!
Though thy beard so hoary be,
The King hath sent to have thee seized,
For Alhama's loss displeased.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVI
And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That this for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVII
'Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth!
Let the Moorish Monarch know,
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVIII
'But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;

And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIX
'Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives!
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XX
'I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXI
And as these things the old Moor said,
They sever'd from the trunk his head;
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
'Twas carried, as the King decreed.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXII
And men and infants therein weep
Their loss, so heavy and so deep;
Granada's ladies, all she rears
Within her walls, burst into tears.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXIII
And from the windows o'er the walls
The sable web of mourning falls;
The King weeps as a woman o'er
His loss, for it is much and sore.
Woe is me, Alhama!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

I
THEY say that Hope is happiness;
But genuine Love must prize the past,
And Memory wakes the thoughts that
bless:
They rose the first—they set the last;

II
And all that Memory loves the most
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Hath melted into Memory.

III
Alas! it is delusion all:
The future cheats us from afar,
Nor can we be what we recall,
Nor dare we think on what we are.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

TRANSLATION FROM VITTORELLI

ON A NUN

Sonnet composed in the name of a father, whose daughter had recently died shortly after her marriage; and addressed to the father of her who had lately taken the veil.

Of two fair virgins, modest, though ad-
mired,
Heaven made us happy; and now,
wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth
desires,
And gazing upon *either, both* required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly
fired⁵
Becomes extinguish'd, soon—too soon
—expires:
But thine, within the closing grate re-
tired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But *thou* at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never-meet-
ing eyes,¹⁰
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice
once more:
I to the marble, where *my* daughter lies,
Rush,—the swoln flood of bitterness
I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock—
but none replies.

ON THE BUST OF HELEN BY CANOVA

In this beloved marble view,
Above the works and thoughts of man,
What Nature *could*, but *would not*, do,
And Beauty and Canova *can*!
Beyond imagination's power,⁵
Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With immortality her dower,
Behold the *Helen* of the *heart*!

November 1816.

SONG FOR THE LUDDITES

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with
blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

When the web that we weave is com-
plete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

III

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd!

December 1816.

VERSICLES

I READ the 'Christabel';
Very well:
I read the 'Missionary';
Pretty—very
I tried at 'Ilderim';⁵
Ahem!
I read a sheet of 'Marg'ret of Anjou';
Can you?
I turn'd a page of Scott's 'Waterloo';
Pooh! pooh!¹⁰
I look'd at Wordsworth's milk-white
'Rylstone Doe';
Hillo!
&c. &c. &c.

March 1817.

SO, WE'LL GO NO MORE A ROVING

I

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

III

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

1817.

TO THOMAS MOORE

WHAT are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
Sighing or suing now,⁵
Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
Which, Thomas Moore?

But the Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!¹⁰
The Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

TO MR. MURRAY

To hook the reader, you, John Murray,
Have publish'd 'Anjou's Margaret,
Which won't be sold off in a hurry
(At least, it has not been as yet);
And then, still further to bewilder 'em, 5
Without remorse, you set up 'Ilderim';
So mind you don't get into debt,
Because as how, if you should fail,
These books would be but baddish bail.

And mind you do *not* let escape 10
These rhymes to Morning Post or Perry,
Which would be *very* treacherous—
very,
And get me into such a scrape!
For, firstly, I should have to sally,
All in my little boat, against a *Galley*;
And, should I chance to slay the Assyrian
wight, 16
Have next to combat with the female
knight.

March 25, 1817.

TO THOMAS MOORE

I

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

II

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

III

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

IV

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

V

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be—peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

July 1817.

EPISTLE FROM MR. MURRAY TO DR. POLIDORI

DEAR Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,—
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief, 5
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery: 10

Your dialogue is apt and smart:
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies.
In short, your tragedy would be 15
The very thing to hear and see:
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible, 20
But—and I grieve to speak it—plays
Are drugs—mere drugs, sir—now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by 'Manuel,'—
Too lucky if it prove not annual,—
And Sotheby, with his 'Orestes,' 25
(Which, by the by, the author's best is,)
Has lain so very long on hand,
That I despair of all demand.
I've advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;—
Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber, 31
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of—it's no more a drama 35
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama:
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice.
In short, sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another. 40
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the street so thunder!

My room's so full—we've Gifford here
Reading MS., with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles. 46

The Quarterly—Ah, sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!—
A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a 50
Short compass what—but to resume:
As I was saying, sir, the room—
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and
Wards,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

And others, neither bards nor wits:—
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way;
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chan-
trey,

Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance—
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!
Thus run our time and tongues away;—
But, to return, sir, to your play:
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill;
My hands so full, my head so busy,
I'm almost dead, and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY.
August 1817.

EPISTLE TO MR. MURRAY

My dear Mr. Murray,
You're in a damn'd hurry,
To set up this ultimate Canto;
But (if they don't rob us)
You'll see Mr. Hobhouse
Will bring it safe in his portmanteau.

For the Journal you hint of,
As ready to print off,
No doubt you do right to commend it;
But as yet I have writ off
The devil a bit of
Our 'Beppo':—when copied, I'll send
it.

Then you've . . . 's Tour,—
No great things, to be sure,—
You could hardly begin with a less
work;
For the pompous rascallion,
Who don't speak Italian
Nor French, must have scribbled by
guess work.

You can make any loss up
With 'Spence' and his gossip,
A work which must surely succeed;
Then Queen Mary's Epistle-craft,
With the new 'Fytte' of 'Whistlecraft,'
Must make people purchase and read.

Then you've General Gordon,
Who girded his sword on,
To serve with a Muscovite master
And help him to polish
A nation so owlish,
They thought shaving their beards a
disaster.

For the man, 'poor and shrewd,'
With whom you'd conclude
A compact without more delay,
Perhaps some such pen is
Still extant in Venice;
But please, sir, to mention *your* pay.
Venice, January 8, 1818.

TO MR. MURRAY

STRAHAN, Tonson, Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
For thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
My Murray.

To thee, with hope and terror dumb, 5
The unfledged MS. authors come;
Thou printest all—and sellest some—
My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,— 10
But where is thy new Magazine,
My Murray?

Along thy sprucest bookshelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine—
The 'Art of Cookery,' and mine, 15
My Murray.

Tours, Travels, Essays, too, I wist,
And Sermons, to thy mill bring grist;
And then thou hast the 'Navy List,'
My Murray. 20

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without 'the Board of Longitude,'
Although this narrow paper would,
My Murray.
Venice, March 25, 1818.

ON THE BIRTH OF JOHN WILLIAM RIZZO HOPPNER

His father's sense, his mother's grace,
In him, I hope, will always fit so;
With—still to keep him in good case—
The health and appetite of Rizzo.
February 1813.

ODE ON VENICE

OH Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do?—anything but
weep: 6
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers—as the
slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Are they to those that were; and thus they
 creep, ¹²
 Crouching and crab-like, through their
 sapping streets.
 Oh! agony—that centuries should reap
 No mellow harvest! Thirteen hundred
 years ¹⁵
 Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and
 tears;
 And every monument the stranger meets,
 Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner
 greets;
 And even the Lion all subdued appears,
 And the harsh sound of the barbarian
 drum, ²⁰
 With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
 The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
 The soft waves, once all musical to song,
 That heaved beneath the moonlight with
 the throng
 Of gondolas—and to the busy hum ²⁵
 Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful
 deeds
 Were but the overbeating of the heart,
 And flow of too much happiness, which
 needs
 The aid of age to turn its course apart
 From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
 Of sweet sensations, battling with the
 blood. ³¹
 But these are better than the gloomy
 errors,
 The weeds of nations in their last decay,
 When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd
 terrors,
 And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to
 slay; ³⁵
 And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
 The sick man's lightning half an hour ere
 death,
 When Faintness, the last mortal birth of
 Pain,
 And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
 Of the cold staggering race which Death
 is winning, ⁴⁰
 Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
 Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
 To him appears renewal of his breath,
 And freedom the mere numbness of his
 chain; ⁴⁴
 And then he talks of life, and how again
 He feels his spirit soaring—albeit weak,
 And of the fresher air, which he would
 seek:
 And as he whispers knows not that he
 That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
 And so the film comes o'er him, and the
 dizzy ⁵⁰
 Chamber swims round and round, and
 shadows busy,
 At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
 Till the last rattle chokes the strangled
 scream,

And all is ice and blackness,—and the
 earth
 That which it was the moment ere our
 birth. ⁵⁵

II

There is no hope for nations!—Search the
 page
 Of many thousand years—the daily
 scene,
 The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
 The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
 Hath taught us nought, or little: still
 we lean ⁶⁰
 On things that rot beneath our weight,
 and wear
 Our strength away in wrestling with the
 air:
 For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the
 beasts
 Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
 Are of as high an order—they must go
 Even where their driver goads them,
 though to slaughter. ⁶⁶
 Ye men, who pour your blood for kings
 as water,
 What have they given your children in re-
 turn?
 A heritage of servitude and woes,
 A blindfold bondage, where your hire is
 blows. ⁷⁰
 What! do not yet the red-hot plough-
 shares burn,
 O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
 And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;
 Kissing the hand that guides you to your
 scars,
 And glorying as you tread the glowing
 bars? ⁷⁵
 All that your sires have left you, all that
 Time
 Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
 Spring from a different theme! Ye see and
 read,
 Admire and sigh, and then succumb and
 bleed!
 Save the few spirits who, despite of all,
 And worse than all, the sudden crimes
 engender'd ⁸¹
 By the down-thundering of the prison-
 wall,
 And thirst to swallow the sweet waters
 tender'd,
 Gushing from Freedom's fountains, when
 the crowd,
 Madden'd with centuries of drought, are
 loud, ⁸⁵
 And trample on each other to obtain
 The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
 Heavy and sore, in which long yoked they
 plough'd
 The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow
 grain,

OCCASIONAL PIECES

IV

'Twas not for them, their necks were too
much bow'd,⁹⁰
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of
pain:⁹⁰
Yes! the few spirits, who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the
cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's
laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake,
smite⁹⁵
But for a term, then pass, and leave the
earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations—fair, when free—
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for
thee!¹⁰⁰

III

Glory and Empire! once upon these
towers
With Freedom—godlike Triad! how ye
sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those
hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench her spirit; in her
fate¹⁰⁵
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs
knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn
to hate,
Although they humbled—with the kingly
few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship; even her
crimes¹¹⁰
Were of the softer order—born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the
dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless con-
quests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from
above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which
incessant¹¹⁵
Flew between earth and the unholy Cres-
cent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth
may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which
clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who
owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious
struggles;¹²⁰
Yet she but shares with them a common
woe,
And call'd the 'kingdom' of a conquering
foe,
But knows what all—and, most of all, we
know—
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

The name of Commonwealth is past and
gone¹²⁵
O'er the three fractions of the groaning
globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to
own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a
time,¹³⁰
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great
clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought
for, and¹³⁶
Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other
land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's
motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science—
Still one great clime, in full and free de-
fiance,¹⁴²
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sub-
lime,
Above the far Atlantic!—She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feeble crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands
have bought¹⁴⁷
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still,
still, for ever,
Better, though each man's life-blood were
a river,
That it should flow, and overflow, than
creep¹⁵⁰
Through thousand lazy channels in our
veins,
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and
chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering: better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are
free,¹⁵⁵
In their proud charnel of Thermopylae,
Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the
deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

STANZAS TO THE PO

RIVER, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the lady of my love, when
she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance
recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me;

OCCASIONAL PIECES

What if thy deep and ample stream should
 be
 A mirror of my heart, where she may
 read
 The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
 Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy
 speed!

What do I say—a mirror of my heart?
 Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and
 strong?
 Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
 And such as thou art were my passions
 long.

Time may have somewhat tamed them,—
 not for ever;
 Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for
 aye
 Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
 Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk
 away:

But left long wrecks behind, and now again,
 Borne on our old unchanged career, we
 move:
 Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
 And I—to loving *one* I should not love.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
 Her native walls, and murmur at her
 feet;
 Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall
 breathe
 The twilight air, unharm'd by summer's
 heat.

She will look on thee,—I have look'd on
 thee,
 Full of that thought: and, from that
 moment, ne'er
 Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see
 Without the inseparable sigh for her!

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy
 stream,
 Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on
 now:
 Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
 That happy wave repass me in its flow!

The wave that bears my tears returns no
 more:
 Will she return by whom that wave shall
 sweep?—
 Both tread thy banks, both wander on
 thy shore,
 I by thy source, she by the dark-blue
 deep.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
 Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space
 of earth,
 But the distraction of a various lot,
 As various as the climates of our birth.

A stranger loves the lady of the land, 41
 Born far beyond the mountains, but his
 blood
 Is all meridian, as if never fann'd
 By the black wind that chills the polar
 flood.

My blood is all meridian; were it not, 45
 I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
 In spite of tortures ne'er to be forgot,
 A slave again of love,—at least of thee.

'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish
 young—
 Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
 To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
 And then, at least, my heart can ne'er
 be moved.

April 1819.

SONNET TO GEORGE THE FOURTH

ON THE REPEAL OF LORD EDWARD
 FITZGERALD'S FORFEITURE

To be the father of the fatherless,
 To stretch the hand from the throne's
 height, and raise
 His offspring, who expired in other days
 To make thy sire's sway by a kingdom
 less,—

This is to be a monarch, and repress 5
 Envy into unutterable praise.
 Dismiss thy guard, and trust thee to such
 traits,

For who would lift a hand, except to bless?
 Were it not easy, sir, and is't not sweet
 To make thyself beloved? and to be
 Omnipotent by mercy's means? for thus
 Thy sovereignty would grow but more
 complete: 12

A despot thou, and yet thy people free,
 And by the heart, not hand, enslaving us.
 Bologna, August 12, 1819.

EPIGRAM

FROM THE FRENCH OF RULHIÈRES

If, for silver or for gold,
 You could melt ten thousand pimples
 Into half a dozen dimples,
 Then your face we might behold, 4
 Looking, doubtless, much more snugly;
 Yet even then 'twould be d—d ugly.

August 12, 1819.

STANZAS

COULD Love for ever
 Run like a river,
 And Time's endeavour
 Be tried in vain—
 No other pleasure 5
 With this could measure;
 And like a treasure
 We'd hug the chain.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form'd for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh!
When link'd together,
In every weather,
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing—
He'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring.

10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45

Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces—
The same fond faces
As through the past:
And eyes, the mirrors
Of your sweet errors,
Reflect but rapture—not least though last.

True, separations
Ask more than patience;
What desperations
From such have risen!
But yet remaining,
What is't but chaining
Hearts which, once waning,
Beat 'gainst their prison?
Time can but cloy love
And use destroy love:
The winged boy, Love,
Is but for boys—
You'll find it torture,
Though sharper, shorter,
To wean, and not wear out your joys.

70
75
80
85
1819

Like chiefs of Faction,
His life is action—
A formal paction
That curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His power enhancing,
He must move on—
Repose but cloy him,
Retreat destroys him,
Love brooks not a degraded throne.

31
35
40
45

HERE's a happy new year! but with reason
I beg you'll permit me to say—
Wish me *many* returns of the *season*,
But as *few* as you please of the day.
January 2, 1820.

40
45

EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM PITT
WITH death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.
January 1820.

Wait not, fond lover!
Till years are over,
And then recover
As from a dream.
While each bewailing
The other's failing,
With wrath and railing,
All hideous seem—
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Wait not till teasing
All passion blight:
If once diminish'd,
Love's reign is finish'd—
Then part in friendship—and bid good-
night.

50
55
60

EPIGRAM
IN digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will. Cobbett has done well:
You visit him on earth again,
He'll visit you in hell.
January 1820.

55
60

STANZAS
WHEN a man hath no freedom to fight
for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neigh-
bours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and
of Rome,
And get knock'd on the head for his
labours.
To do good to mankind is the chivalrous
plan,
And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get
knighted.
November 1820.

65

So shall Affection
To recollection
The dear connexion
Bring back with joy:
You had not waited
Till, tired or hated,
Your passions sated
Began to cloy.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

EPIGRAM

THE world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses who pull;
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull.

THE CHARITY BALL

WHAT matter the pangs of a husband and
father,
If his sorrows in exile be great or be small,
So the Pharisee's glories around her she
gather,
And the saint patronizes her 'charity
ball'!

What matters—a heart which, though
faulty, was feeling,
Be driven to excesses which once could
appal—
That the sinner should suffer is only fair
dealing,
As the saint keeps her charity back for
'the ball'!

EPIGRAM

ON THE BRAZIER'S COMPANY HAVING RE-
SOLVED TO PRESENT AN ADDRESS TO
QUEEN CAROLINE

THE braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass
An address, and present it themselves all
in brass;—

A superfluous pageant—for, by the Lord
Harry!

They'll find where they're going much
more than they carry.

EPIGRAM ON MY WEDDING-DAY

TO PENELOPE

THIS day, of all our days, has done

The worst for me and you:—

'Tis just *six* years since we were *one*,
And *five* since we were *two*.

January 2, 1821.

ON MY THIRTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 22, 1821

THROUGH life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty,
What have these years left to me?
Nothing—except thirty-three.

MARTIAL, LIB. I, EPIG. I

'Hic est, quem legis, ille, quem requiris,
Tota notus in orbe Martialis,' &c.

HE unto whom thou art so partial,
Oh, reader! is the well-known Martial,
The Epigrammatist: while living,
Give him the fame thou wouldest be giving;
So shall he hear, and feel, and know it—
Post obits rarely reach a poet.

BOWLES AND CAMPBELL

To the tune of 'Why, how now, saucy jade?'
WHY, how now, saucy Tom?
If you thus must ramble,
I will publish some
Remarks on Mister Campbell.

ANSWER

WHY, how now, Billy Bowles? 5
Sure the priest is maudlin!
(To the public) How can you, d—n your
souls!
Listen to his twaddling?

February 22, 1821.

EPIGRAMS

OH, Castlereagh! thou art a patriot now;
Cato died for his country, so didst thou:
He perish'd rather than see Rome en-
slaved,
Thou cutt'st thy throat that Britain may
be saved!

So Castlereagh has cut his throat!—The
worst
Of this is,—that his own was not the first.

So *He* has cut his throat at last!—*He!*
Who?

The man who cut his country's long ago.

EPITAPH

POSTERITY will ne'er survey
A nobler grave than this:
Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop, traveller——

JOHN KEATS

WHO kill'd John Keats?
'I,' says the Quarterly,
So savage and Tartarly;
'Twas one of my feats.'

Who shot the arrow? 5
'The poet-priest Milman
(So ready to kill man),
Or Southey, or Barrow.'

July 1821.

THE CONQUEST

[This fragment was found amongst Lord Byron's
papers after his departure from Genoa for
Greece.]

THE Son of Love and Lord of War I sing;
Him who bade England bow to Nor-
mandy,
And left the name of conqueror more
than king
To his unconquerable dynasty.

OCCASIONAL PIECES

Not fann'd alone by Victory's fleeting
wing,
He rear'd his bold and brilliant throne
on high:
The Bastard kept, like lions, his prey fast,
And Britain's bravest victor was the
last.

March 8-9, 1823.

TO MR. MURRAY

For Orford and for Waldegrave
You give much more than he you gave;
Which is not fairly to behave,
My Murray.

Because if a live dog, 'tis said,
Be worth a lion fairly sped,
A *live lord* must be worth *two dead*,
My Murray.

And if, as the opinion goes,
Verse hath a better sale than prose,—
Certes, I should have more than those,
My Murray.

But now this sheet is nearly cramm'd,
So, if *you will*, I shan't be shamm'd,
And if you *won't*, you may be damn'd,
My Murray.

THE IRISH AVATAR

'And Ireland, like a bastinadoed elephant,
kneeling to receive the paltry rider.'—CURRAN.

ERE the daughter of Brunswick is cold in
her grave,
And her ashes still float to their home
o'er the tide,
Lo! George the triumphant speeds over
the wave,
To the long-cherish'd isle which he
loved like his—bride!

True, the great of her bright and brief era
are gone,
The rainbow-like epoch where Freedom
could pause
For the few little years, out of centuries
won,
Which betray'd not, or crush'd not, or
wept not her cause.

True, the chains of the Catholic clank o'er
his rags,
The castle still stands, and the senate's
no more,
And the famine which dwelt on her free-
domless crags
Is extending its steps to her desolate
shore.

To her desolate shore—where the emi-
grant stands
For a moment to gaze ere he flies from
his hearth;

Tears fall on his chain, though it drops
from his hands,
For the dungeon he quits is the place of
his birth.

But he comes! the Messiah of royalty
comes!
Like a goodly Leviathan roll'd from the
waves;
Then receive him as best such an advent
becomes,
With a legion of cooks, and an army of
slaves!

He comes in the promise and bloom of
threescore,
To perform in the pageant the sove-
reign's part—
But long live the shamrock, which sha-
dows him o'er!
Could the green in his *hat* be transferr'd
to his *heart*!

Could that long-wither'd spot but be ver-
dant again,
And a new spring of noble affections
arise—
Then might freedom forgive thee this
dance in thy chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which sad-
dens the skies.

Is it madness or meanness which clings to
thee now?
Were he God—as he is but the com-
monest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on
his brow—
Such servile devotion might shame him
away.

Ay, roar in his train! let thine orators lash
Their fanciful spirits to pamper his
pride—
Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash
His soul o'er the freedom implored and
denied.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the
good!
So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest!
With all which Demosthenes wanted en-
dued,
And his rival or victor in all he possess'd.

Ere Tully arose in the zenith of Rome,
Though unequal'd, preceded, the task
was begun—
But Grattan sprung up like a god from the
tomb
Of ages, the first, last, the saviour, the
one!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

With the skill of an Orpheus to soften the
brute;
With the fire of Prometheus to kindle
mankind;

Even Tyranny listening sate melted or
mute,
And Corruption shrunk scorch'd from
the glance of his mind.

But back to our theme! Back to despots
and slaves!
Feasts furnish'd by Famine! rejoicings
by Pain!

True freedom but welcomes, while slavery
still raves,
When a week's saturnalia hath loosen'd
her chain.

Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck
can afford
(As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin
would hide)

Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy lord!
Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his bless-
ings denied!

Or if freedom past hope be extorted at last,
If the idol of brass find his feet are of
clay,

Must what terror or policy wring forth be
class'd
With what monarchs ne'er give, but as
wolves yield their prey?

Each brute hath its nature; a king's is to
reign,—
To reign! in that word see, ye ages, com-
prised

The cause of the curses all annals contain,
From Cæsar the dreaded to George the
despised!

Wear, Fingal, thy trapping! O'Connell,
proclaim
His accomplishments! Hist!!! and thy
country convince

Half an age's contempt was an error of
fame,
And that 'Hal is the rascaliest, sweet-
est young prince!'

Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal,
recall
The fetters from millions of Catholic
limbs?

Or, has it not bound thee the fastest of all
The slaves, who now hail their betrayer
with hymns?

Ay! 'Build him a dwelling!' let each give
his mite!
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome
hath arisen!

Let thy beggars and helots their pittance
unite—
And a palace bestow for a poor-house
and prison!

Spread—spread, for Vitellius, the royal
repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to
the gorge!
And the roar of his drunkards proclaim
him at last
The fourth of the fools and oppressors
call'd 'George!'

Let the tables be loaded with feasts till they
groan!
Till they groan like thy people, through
ages of woe!
Let the wine flow around the old Bac-
chanal's throne,
Like their blood which has flow'd, and
which yet has to flow.

But let not *his* name be thine idol alone—
On his right hand behold a Sejanus
appears!
Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be
thine own!
A wretch never named but with curses
and jeers!

Till now, when the isle which should blush
for his birth,
Deep, deep as the gore which he shed
on her soil,
Seems proud of the reptile which crawl'd
from her earth,
And for murder repays him with shouts
and a smile.

Without one single ray of her genius, with-
out
The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her
race—
The miscreant who well might plunge Erin
in doubt
If *she* ever gave birth to a being so base.

If she did—let her long-boasted proverb
be hush'd,
Which proclaims that from Erin no
reptile can spring—
See the cold-blooded serpent, with venom
full flush'd,
Still warming its folds in the breast of a
king!

Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin,
how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and
tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee
below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf
still!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

My voice, though but humble, was raised
for thy right, 105
My vote, as a freeman's, still voted thee
free,
This hand, though but feeble, would arm
in thy fight,
And this heart, though outworn, had a
throb still for thee!

Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou
art not my land,
I have known noble hearts and great
souls in thy sons, 110
And I wept with the world, o'er the patriot
band
Who are gone, but I weep them no
longer as once.

For happy are they now reposing afar,—
Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan,
all
Who, for years, were the chiefs in the
eloquent war, 115
And redeem'd, if they have not retarded,
thy fall.

Yes, happy are they in their cold English
graves!
Their shades cannot start to thy shouts
of to-day—
Nor the steps of enslavers and chain-kiss-
ing slaves
Be stamp'd in the turf o'er their fetter-
less clay. 120

Till now I had envied thy sons and their
shore,
Though their virtues were hunted, their
liberties fled;
There was something so warm and sublime
in the core
Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy—
thy dead.

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for
an hour 125
My contempt for a nation so servile,
though sore,
Which though trod like the worm will not
turn upon power,
'Tis the glory of Grattan, and genius of
Moore!

September 1821.

STANZAS WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN FLORENCE AND PISA

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in
story;
The days of our youth are the days of our
glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-
twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so
plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow
that is wrinkled? 5
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew
besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head
that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only*
give glory!

Oh FAME!—if I e'er took delight in thy
praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sound-
ing phrases, 10
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one
discover,
She thought that I was not unworthy to
love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I
found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that
surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was
bright in my story, 15
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.
November, 1821.

STANZAS TO A HINDOO AIR

Oh! my lonely—lonely—lonely—Pil-
low!
Where is my lover? where is my lover?
Is it his bark which my dreary dreams dis-
cover?
Far—far away! and alone along the
billow?

Oh! my lonely—lonely—lonely—Pil-
low! 5
Why must my head ache where his gentle
brow lay?
How the long night flags lovelessly and
slowly,
And my head droops over thee like the
willow!

Oh! thou, my sad and solitary Pillow!
Send me kind dreams to keep my heart
from breaking, 10
In return for the tears I shed upon thee
waking;
Let me not die till he comes back o'er
the billow.

Then if thou wilt—no more my *lonely*
Pillow,
In one embrace let these arms again enfold
him,
And then expire of the joy—but to behold
him! 15
Oh! my lone bosom!—oh! my lonely
Pillow!

OCCASIONAL PIECES

IMPROMPTU

BENEATH Blessington's eyes
The reclaimed Paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an Apple should grieve, 5
What mortal would not play the Devil? 1823.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON

You have ask'd for a verse:—the request
In a rhymers 'twere strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

Were I now as I was, I had sung 5
What Lawrence has painted so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire, 11
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years—
There are moments which act as a
plough;
And there is not a furrow appears 15
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;
For sorrow has torn from my lyre 19
The string which was worthy the strain.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

MISSO LONGHI, Jan. 22, 1824.

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf; 5
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys.
Is lone as some volcanic isle; 10
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share, 15
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul,
nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier, 20
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she is awake!) 25
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee 30
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrettest thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give 35
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest. 40

SATIRES

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

A SATIRE

'I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.'
SHAKESPIARE.
'Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd critics too.'—POPE.

PREFACE*

ALL my friends, learned and unlearned, have urged me not to publish this Satire with my name. If I were to be 'turned from the career of my humour by quibbles quick, and paper bullets of the brain,' I should have complied with their counsel. But I am not to be terrified by abuse, or bullied by reviewers, with or without arms. I can safely say that I have attacked none personally, who did not commence on the offensive. An author's works are public property: he who purchases may judge, and publish his opinion if he pleases, and the authors I have endeavoured to commemorate may do by me as I have done by them. I dare say they will succeed better in condemning my scribbles, than in mending their own. But my object is not to prove that I can write well, but, if possible, to make others write better.

As the poem has met with far more success than I expected, I have endeavoured in this edition to make some additions and alterations, to render it more worthy of public perusal.

In the first edition of this satire, published anonymously, fourteen lines on the subject of Bowles's Pope were written by, and inserted at the request of, an ingenious friend of mine†, who has now in the press a volume of poetry. In the present edition they are erased, and some of my own substituted in their stead; my only reason for this being that which I conceive would operate with any other person in the same manner,—a determination not to publish with my name any production which was not entirely and exclusively my own composition.

With regard to the real talents of many of the poetical persons whose performances are mentioned or alluded to in the following pages, it is presumed by the author that there can be little difference of opinion in the public at large; though, like other sectaries, each has his separate tabernacle of proselytes, by whom his abilities are over-rated, his faults overlooked, and his metrical canons received without scruple and without consideration. But the unquestionable possession of considerable genius by several of the writers here censured renders their mental prostitution more to be regretted. Imbecility may be pitied, or, at worst, laughed at and forgotten: perverted powers demand the most decided reprehension. No one can wish more than the author that some known and able writer had undertaken their exposure; but Mr Gifford has devoted himself to Massinger, and, in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner may, in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum to prevent the extension of so deplorable an epidemic, provided there be no quackery in his treatment of the malady. A caustic is here offered; as it is to be feared nothing short of actual cautery can recover the numerous patients afflicted with the present prevalent and distressing *rabies* for rhyming.—As to the Edinburgh Reviewers, it would indeed require an Hercules to crush the Hydra; but if the author succeeds in merely 'bruising one of the heads of the serpent,' though his own hand should suffer in the encounter, he will be amply satisfied.

<p>STILL must I hear?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl His creaking couplets in a tavern hall, And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch reviews Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my muse? Prepare for rhyme—I'll publish, right or wrong: Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.</p> <p>Oh! nature's noblest gift—my grey goose-quill! Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will, Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen, That mighty instrument of little men!</p>	<p>The pen! foredoom'd to aid the mental throes Of brains that labour, big with verse or prose, Though nymphs forsake, and critics may deride, The lover's solace, and the author's pride. What wits, what poets dost thou daily raise! How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise! Condemn'd at length to be forgotten quite, With all the pages which 'twas thine to write.</p>
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* This preface was written for the second edition, and printed with it. The noble author had left this country previous to the publication of that edition, and is not yet returned.—*Note to the fourth edition, 1811.*
† [Mr. Hobhouse.] ‡ [Here the preface to the first edition commenced.]

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
Once laid aside, but now assumed again,
Our task complete, like Hamet's shall be
free; 21

Though spurn'd by others, yet beloved by
me:

Then let us soar to-day; no common theme,
No eastern vision, no distemper'd dream
Inspires—our path, though full of thorns,
is plain; 25

Smooth be the verse, and easy be the
strain.

When Vice triumphant holds her sov'-
reign sway,

Obey'd by all who nought beside obey;
When Folly, frequent harbinger of crime,
Bedecks her cap with bells of every clime;
When knaves and fools combined o'er all
prevail, 31

And weigh their justice in a golden scale;
E'en then the boldest start from public
sneers,

Afraid of shame, unknown to other fears,
More darkly sin, by satire kept in awe,
And shrink from ridicule, though not
from law. 36

Such is the force of wit! but not belong
To me the arrows of satiric song;
The royal vices of our age demand
A keener weapon, and a mightier hand.
Still there are follies, e'en for me to chase,
And yield at least amusement in the race;
Laugh when I laugh, I seek no other fame;
The cry is up, and scribblers are my game.
Speed, Pegasus!—ye strains of great and
small, 45

Ode, epic, elegy, have at you all!
I too can scrawl, and once upon a time
I pour'd along the town a flood of rhyme,
A schoolboy freak, unworthy praise or
blame;

I printed—older children do the same. 50
'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in
print;

A book's a book, although there's nothing
in't.

Not that a title's sounding charm can save
Or scrawl or scribbler from an equal
grave:

This Lambe must own, since his patrician
name 55

Fail'd to preserve the spurious farce from
shame.

No matter, George continues still to write,
Though now the name is veil'd from pub-
lic sight.

Moved by the great example, I pursue
The self-same road, but make my own
review: 60

Not seek great Jeffrey's, yet, like him,
will be

Self-constituted judge of poesy.

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save censure—critics all are ready made.
Take hackney'd jokes from Miller, got by
rote, 65

With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skill'd to find or forge a fault;
A turn for punning, call it Attic salt;
To Jeffrey go, be silent and discreet;
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per
sheet: 70

Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a sharper hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for
wit;

Care not for feeling—pass your proper
jest,

And stand a critic, hated yet caress'd.

And shall we own such judgment? no
—as soon 75

Seek roses in December—ice in June;
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff;
Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false, before
You trust in critics, who themselves are
sore; 80
Or yield one single thought to be misled
By Jeffrey's heart, or Lambe's Bæotian
head.

To these young tyrants, by themselves
misplaced,

Combined usurpers on the throne of taste;
To these, when authors bend in humble
awe, 85

And hail their voice as truth, their word
as law—

While these are censors, 'twould be sin to
spare;

While such are critics, why should I for-
bear?

But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'Tis doubtful whom to seek, or whom to
shun; 90

Nor know we when to spare, or where to
strike,

Our bards and censors are so much alike.

Then should you ask me, why I venture
o'er

The path which Pope and Gifford trod be-
fore;

If not yet sicken'd, you can still proceed:
Go on; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
'But hold!' exclaims a friend, 'here's some
neglect: 97

This—that—and t'other line seem in-
correct.'

What then? the self-same blunder Pope
has got,

And careless Dryden—'Ay, but Pye has
not:—' 100

Indeed!—'tis granted, faith!—but what
care I?

Better to err with Pope, than shine with
Pye.

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate
 days
 Ignoble themes obtain'd mistaken praise,
 When sense and wit with poesy allied,
 No fabled graces, flourish'd side by side;
 From the same fount their inspiration
 drew,
 And, rear'd by taste, bloom'd fairer as they
 grew.
 Then, in this happy isle, a Pope's pure
 strain
 Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought
 in vain;
 A polish'd nation's praise aspired to claim,
 And raised the people's, as the poet's
 fame.
 Like him great Dryden pour'd the tide of
 song,
 In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly
 strong.
 Then Congreve's scenes could cheer, or
 Otway's melt—
 For nature then an English audience felt.
 But why these names, or greater still, re-
 trace,
 When all to feeble bards resign their
 place?
 Yet to such times our lingering looks are
 cast,
 When taste and reason with those times
 are past.
 Now look around, and turn each trifling
 page,
 Survey the precious works that please the
 age;
 This truth at least let satire's self allow,
 No dearth of bards can be complain'd of
 now.
 The loaded press beneath her labour
 groans,
 And printers' devils shake their weary
 bones;
 While Southey's epics cram the creaking
 shelves,
 And Little's lyrics shine in hot-press'd
 twelves.
 Thus saith the Preacher: 'Nought beneath
 the sun
 Is new,' yet still from change to change
 we run:
 What varied wonders tempt us as they
 pass!
 The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism, and
 gas,
 In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
 Till the swoln bubble bursts—and all is
 air!
 Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
 Where dull pretenders grapple for the
 prize:
 O'er taste awhile these pseudo-bards pre-
 vail;
 Each country book-club bows the knee to
 Baal,

And, hurling lawful genius from the
 throne,
 Erects a shrine and idol of its own;
 Some leaden calf—but whom it matters
 not,
 From soaring Southey down to grovelling
 Stott.
 Behold! in various throngs the scrib-
 bling crew,
 For notice eager, pass in long review:
 Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
 And rhyme and blank maintain an equal
 race;
 Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on
 ode;
 And tales of terror jostle on the road;
 Immeasurable measures move along;
 For simpering folly loves a varied song,
 To strange mysterious dullness still the
 friend,
 Admires the strain she cannot compre-
 hend.
 Thus Lays of Minstrels—may they be the
 last!—
 On half-strung harps whine mournful to
 the blast.
 While mountain spirits prate to river
 sprites,
 That dames may listen to the sound at
 nights;
 And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
 Decoy young border-nobles through the
 wood,
 And skip at every step, Lord knows how
 high,
 And frighten foolish babes, the Lord
 knows why;
 While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
 Forbidding knights to read who cannot
 spell,
 Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
 And fight with honest men to shield a
 knave.
 Next view in state, proud prancing on
 his roan,
 The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
 Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the
 fight,
 Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
 The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
 A mighty mixture of the great and base.
 And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit
 perchance,
 On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
 Though Murray with his Miller may com-
 bine
 To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per
 line?
 No! when the sons of song descend to
 trade,
 Their bays are sear, their former laurels
 fade.

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for
fame:

Still for stern Mammon may they toil in
vain!

And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just re-
ward ¹⁸¹

Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long 'good night to Marmion.'

These are the themes that claim our
plaudits now; ¹⁸⁵

These are the bards to whom the muse
must bow;

While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to Walter Scott.

The time has been, when yet the muse
was young,

When Homer swept the lyre, and Maro
sung, ¹⁹⁰

An epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hail'd the magic
name:

The work of each immortal bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.

Empires have moulder'd from the face of
earth, ¹⁹⁵

Tongues have expired with those who gave
them birth,

Without the glory such a strain can give,
As even in ruin bids the language live.

Not so with us, though minor bards, content
On one great work a life of labour spent:

With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,
Behold the ballad-monger Southey rise!

To him let Camoëns, Milton, Tasso yield,
Whose annual strains, like armies, take
the field.

First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
The scourge of England and the boast of
France! ²⁰⁶

Though burnt by wicked Bedford for a
witch,

Behold her statue placed in glory's niche;
Her fetters burst, and just released from
prison, ²⁰⁹

A virgin phoenix from her ashes risen.
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,

Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son:
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'er-
threw

More mad magicians than the world e'er
knew. ²¹⁴

Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign—the rival of Tom Thumb!

Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doom'd the last of all thy
race! ²¹⁸

Well might triumphant genii bear thee
hence,

Illustrious conqueror of common sense!

Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads
his sails, ²²¹

Cacique in Mexico, and prince in Wales;
Tells us strange tales, as other travellers
do,

More old than Mandeville's, and not so
true.

Oh! Southey! Southey! cease thy varied
song! ²²⁵

A bard may chant too often and too long:
As thou art strong in verse, in mercy,
spare!

A fourth, alas! were more than we could
bear.

But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary
way; ²³⁰

If still in Berkley ballads most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,

The babe unborn thy dread intent may
rue:

'God help thee,' Southey, and thy readers
too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy
school, ²³⁵

That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay

As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who warns his friend 'to shake off toil
and trouble,

And quit his books, for fear of growing
double;' ²⁴⁰

Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely
prose;

Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane;

And Christmas stories tortured into
rhyme ²⁴⁵

Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,

The idiot mother of 'an idiot boy';
A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,

And, like his bard, confounded night with
day; ²⁵⁰

So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,

That all who view the 'idiot in his glory'
Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed
here, ²⁵⁵

To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him
best,

Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse ²⁵⁹

To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass

The bard who soars to elegiac an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,

He brays the laureat of the long-ear'd
kind.

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Oh! wonder-working Lewis! monk, or
bard,²⁶⁵
Who fain wouldst make Parnassus a
churchyard!

Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy
brow,

Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!
Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy
stand,

By gibb'ring spectres hail'd, thy kindred
band;²⁷⁰

Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
To please the females of our modest age;
All hail, M. P.! from whose infernal brain
Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly
train;

At whose command 'grim women' throng
in crowds,²⁷⁵

And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
With 'small gray men,' 'wild yagers,' and
what not,

To crown with honour thee and Walter
Scott;

Again all hail! if tales like thine may
please,

St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease;
Even Satan's self with thee might dread to
dwell,²⁸¹

And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.

Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
Of virgins melting, not to Vesta's fire,
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion
flush'd,²⁸⁵

Strikes his wild lyre, whilst listening dames
are hush'd?

'Tis Little! young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral, in his lay!

Grieved to condemn, the muse must still
be just,

Nor spare melodious advocates of lust.
Pure is the flame which o'er her altar
burns;²⁹¹

From grosser incense with disgust she
turns:

Yet kind to youth, this expiation o'er,
She bids thee 'mend thy line and sin no
more.'

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,
To whom such glittering ornaments be-
long,²⁹⁶

Hibernian Strangford! with thine eyes of
blue,

And boasted locks of red or auburn hue,
Whose plaintive strain each love-sick miss
admires,

And o'er harmonious fustian half expires,
Learn, if thou canst, to yield thine author's
sense,³⁰¹

Nor vend thy sonnets on a false pretence.
Think'st thou to gain thy verse a higher
place,

By dressing Camoëns in a suit of lace?

Mend, Strangford! mend thy morals and
thy taste;³⁰⁵

Be warm, but pure; be amorous, but be
chaste;

Cease to deceive; thy pilfer'd harp restore,
Nor teach the Lusian bard to copy Moore.

Behold!—ye tarts!—one moment spare
the text—

Hayley's last work, and worst—until his
next;³¹⁰

Whether he spin poor couplets into plays,
Or damn the dead with purgatorial praise,

His style in youth or age is still the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame.

Triumphant first see 'Temper's Triumphs'
shine!³¹⁵

At least I'm sure they triumph'd over mine.
Of 'Music's Triumphs,' all who read may
swear

That luckless music never triumph'd there.

Moravians, rise! bestow some meet re-
ward

On dull devotion—Lo! the Sabbath bard,
Sepulchral Grahame, pours his notes sub-
lime³²¹

In mangled prose, nor e'en aspires to
rhyme;

Breaks into blank the Gospel of St. Luke,
And boldly pilfers from the Pentateuch;

And, undisturb'd by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the
Psalms.³²⁶

Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings
A thousand visions of a thousand things,

And shows, still whimpering through three-
score of years,

The maudlin prince of mournful sonnet-
eers.³³⁰

And art thou not their prince, harmonious
Bowles!

Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
Whether thou sing'st with equal ease, and
grief,

The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf;
Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
What merry sounds proceed from Oxford
bells,³³⁶

Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
In every chime that jingled from Ostend;

Ah! how much juster were thy muse's hap,
If to thy bells thou wouldst but add a cap!

Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still
blest,³⁴¹

All love thy strain, but children, like it
best.

'Tis thine, with gentle Little's moral song,
To soothe the mania of the amorous
throng!

With thee our nursery damsels shed their
tears,³⁴⁵

Ere miss as yet completes her infant years:

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

But in her teens thy whining powers are
vain;
She quits poor Bowles for Little's purer
strain.
Now to soft themes thou scornest to con-
fine 349
The lofty numbers of a harp like thine;
'Awake a louder and a loftier strain,'
Such as none heard before, or will again!
Where all Discoveries jumble from the
flood,
Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
By more or less, are sung in every book,
From Captain Noah down to Captain
Cook. 356
Nor this alone; but, pausing on the road,
The bard sighs forth a gentle episode;
And gravely tells—attend, each beauteous
miss!—
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.
Bowles! in thy memory let this precept
dwell, 361
Stick to thy sonnets, man!—at least they
sell.
But if some new-born whim, or larger
bribe,
Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for
a scribe;
If chance some bard, though once by
dunces fear'd, 365
Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
If Pope, whose fame and genius, from the
first,
Have foil'd the best of critics, needs the
worst,
Do thou essay: each fault, each failing
scan;
The first of poets was, alas! but man.
Rake from each ancient dunghill every
pearl, 371
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll;
Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not
feel, 375
Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal,
Write, as if St. John's soul could still in-
And do from hate what Mallet did for hire.
Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial
time,
To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph to
rhyme; 380
Throng'd with the rest around his living
head,
Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead;
A meet reward had crown'd thy glorious
gains,
And link'd thee to the Dunciad for thy
pains.
Another epic! Who inflicts again 385
More books of blank upon the sons of
men?

Bæotian Cottle, rich Bristowa's boast,
Imports old stories from the Cambrian
coast,
And sends his goods to market—all alive!
Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five?
Fresh fish from Helicon! who'll buy,
who'll buy?
The precious bargain's cheap—in faith,
not I.
Your turtle-feeder's verse must needs be
flat,
Though Bristol bloat him with the ver-
dant fat;
If Commerce fills the purse, she clogs the
brain, 395
And Amos Cottle strikes the lyre in vain.
In him an author's luckless lot behold,
Condemn'd to make the books which once
he sold.
Oh, Amos Cottle!—Phæbus! what a name
To fill the speaking trump of future
fame!— 400
Oh, Amos Cottle! for a moment think
What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
Oh! pen perverted! paper misapplied!
Had Cottle still adorn'd the counter's side,
Bent o'er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
Been taught to make the paper which he
soils, 408
Plough'd, delved, or plied the oar with
lusty limb,
He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him.
As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er
may sleep,
So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond,
heaves
Dull Maurice all his granite weight of
leaves: 414
Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain!
The petrifications of a plodding brain,
That, ere they reach the top, fall lumbering
back again.
With broken lyre, and cheek serenely
pale,
Lo! sad Alcæus wanders down the vale;
Though fair they rose, and might have
bloom'd at last, 420
His hopes have perish'd by the northern
blast:
Nipp'd in the bud by Caledonian gales,
His blossoms wither as the blast prevails!
O'er his lost works let classic Sheffield
weep;
May no rude hand disturb their early
sleep! 425
Yet say! why should the bard at once
resign
His claim to favour from the sacred Nine?

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

For ever startled by the mingled howl
Of northern wolves, that still in darkness
prowl;

A coward brood, which mangle as they
prey, 430

By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;
Aged or young, the living or the dead,
No mercy find—these harpies must be fed.
Why do the injured unresisting yield
The calm possession of their native field?
Why tamely thus before their fangs re-
treat, 436
Nor hunt the blood-hounds back to Ar-
thur's Seat?

Health to immortal Jeffrey! once, in
name,
England could boast a judge almost the
same;

In soul so like, so merciful, yet just, 440
Some think that Satan has resign'd his trust,
And given the spirit to the world again,
To sentence letters, as he sentenced men.
With hand less mighty, but with heart as
black,

With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the courts betimes, though all that
law 446

As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw;
Since well instructed in the patriot school
To rail at party, though a party tool,
Who knows, if chance his patrons should
restore 450

Back to the sway they forfeited before,
His scribbling toils some recompense may
meet,

And raise this Daniel to the judgment-seat?
Let Jeffrey's shade indulge the pious hope,
And greeting thus, present him with a
rope: 455

'Heir to my virtues! man of equal mind!
Skill'd to condemn as to traduce mankind,
This cord receive, for thee reserved with
care,

To wield in judgment, and at length to
wear.'

Health to great Jeffrey! Heaven pre-
serve his life, 460

To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
And guard it sacred in its future wars,
Since authors sometimes seek the field of
Mars!

Can none remember that eventful day,
That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray,
When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street myrmidons stood laugh-
ing by?

Oh, day disastrous! on her firm-set rock,
Dunedin's castle felt a secret shock;
Dark roll'd the sympathetic waves of
Forth, 470

Low groan'd the startled whirlwinds of
the north;

Tweed ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued its calm career;
Arthur's steep summit nodded to its base,
The surly Tolbooth scarcely kept her
place. 475

The Tolbooth felt—for marble sometimes
can,

On such occasions, feel as much as man—
The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
If Jeffrey died, except within her arms:
Nay last, not least, on that portentous
morn, 480

The sixteenth story, where himself was
born,

His patrimonial garret, fell to ground,
And pale Edina shudder'd at the sound:
Strew'd were the streets around with milk-
white reams,

Flow'd all the Canongate with inky
streams; 485

This of his candour seem'd the sable dew,
That of his valour show'd the bloodless
hue;

And all with justice deem'd the two com-
bined

The mingled emblems of his mighty mind.
But Caledonia's goddess hover'd o'er

The field, and saved him from the wrath
of Moore; 491

From either pistol snatch'd the vengeful
lead,

And straight restored it to her favourite's
head;

That head, with greater than magnetic
power,

Caught it, as Danaë caught the golden
shower, 495

And, though the thickening dross will
scarce refine,

Augments its ore, and is itself a mine.
'My son,' she cried, 'ne'er thirst for gore
again,

Resign the pistol and resume the pen;
O'er politics and poesy preside, 500

Boast of thy country, and Britannia's
guide!

For long as Albion's heedless sons submit,
Or Scottish taste decides on English wit,
So long shall last thine unmolested reign,
Nor any dare to take thy name in vain.

Behold, a chosen band shall aid thy plan,
And own thee chieftain of the critic clan.
First in the oat-fed phalanx shall be seen
The travell'd thane, Athenian Aberdeen.
Herbert shall wield Thor's hammer, and
sometimes, 510

In gratitude, thou'lt praise his rugged
rhymes.

Smug Sidney too thy bitter page shall seek,
And classic Hallam, much renown'd for
Greek;

Scott may perchance his name and in-
fluence lend, 514

And paltry Pillans shall traduce his friend;

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

While gay Thalia's luckless votary, Lambe,
Damn'd like the devil, devil-like will
damn.

Known be thy name, unbounded be thy
sway!

Thy Holland's banquets shall each toil re-
pay;

While grateful Britain yields the praise she
owes 520

To Holland's hirelings and to learning's
foes.

Yet mark one caution ere thy next Review
Spread its light wings of saffron and of

blue,
Beware lest blundering Brougham destroy
the sale,

Turn beef to bannocks, cauliflowers to
kail. 525

Thus having said, the kilted goddess kiss'd
Her son, and vanish'd in a Scottish mist.

Then prosper, Jeffrey! pertest of the train
Whom Scotland pampers with her fiery
grain!

Whatever blessing wait a genuine Scot,
In double portion swells thy glorious lot;

For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
And showers their odours on thy candid

sheets,
Whose hue and fragrance to thy work
adhere—

This scents its pages, and that gilds its rear.
Lo! blushing Itch, coy nymph, enamour'd

grown, 536
Forsakes the rest, and cleaves to thee
alone;

And, too unjust to other Pictish men,
Enjoys thy person, and inspires thy pen!

Illustrious Holland! hard would be his
lot, 540

His hirelings mention'd, and himself for-
got!

Holland, with Henry Petty at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.

Blest be the banquets spread at Holland
House,

Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may
carouse! 545

Long, long beneath that hospitable roof
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept

aloof.
See honest Hallam lay aside his fork,
Resume his pen, review his Lordship's

work, 549
And, grateful for the dainties on his plate,
Declare his landlord can at least translate!

Dunedin! view thy children with delight,
They write for food—and feed because

they write:
And lest, when heated with the unusual

grape,
Some glowing thoughts should to the press

escape, 555

And tinge with red the female reader's
cheek,

My lady skims the cream of each critique;
Breathes o'er the page her purity of soul,

Reforms each error, and refines the whole.

Now to the Drama turn—Oh! motley
sight! 560

What precious scenes the wondering eyes
invite!

Puns, and a prince within a barrel pent,
And Dibdin's nonsense yield complete

content.
Though now, thank Heaven! the Roscio-
mania's o'er,

And full-grown actors are endured once
more; 565

Yet what avail their vain attempts to
please,

While British critics suffer scenes like
these;

While Reynolds vents his 'dammes!'
'poohs!' and 'zounds!'

And common-place and common sense
confounds?

While Kenney's 'World'—ah! where is
Kenney's wit?— 570

Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless pit;
And Beaumont's pilfer'd Caratach affords

A tragedy complete in all but words?
Who but must mourn, while these are all

the rage,
The degradation of our vaunted stage!

Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent
gone? 576

Have we no living bard of merit?—none!
Awake, George Colman! Cumberland,

awake!
Ring the alarum bell! let folly quake!

Oh, Sheridan! if aught can move thy
pen, 580

Let Comedy assume her throne again;
Abjure the mummery of the German

schools;
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;

Give, as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.

Gods! o'er those boards shall Folly rear
her head, 586

Where Garrick trod, and Siddons lives to
tread?

On those shall Farce display Buffoon'ry's
mask,

And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask?
Shall sapient managers new scenes pro-
duce 590

From Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother
Goose?

While Shakspeare, Otway, Massinger,
forgot,

On stalls must moulder, or in closets rot?
Lo! with what pomp the daily prints pro-
claim

The rival candidates for Attic fame! 595

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

In grim array though Lewis' spectres rise,
Still Skeffington and Goose divide the
prize.

And sure *great* Skeffington must claim our
praise,

For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
Renown'd alike; whose genius ne'er con-
fines 600

Her flight to garnish Greenwood's gay
designs;

Nor sleeps with 'Sleeping Beauties,' but
anon

In five facetious acts comes thundering on,
While poor John Bull, bewilder'd with the
scene

Stares, wondering what the devil it can
mean;

But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it
too.

Such are we now. Ah! wherefore should
we turn

To what our fathers were, unless to
mourn? 609

Degenerate Britons! are ye dead to shame,
Or, kind to dulness, do you fear to blame?

Well may the nobles of our present race
Watch each distortion of a Naldi's face;

Well may they smile on Italy's buffoons,
And worship Catalani's pantaloons, 615

Since their own drama yields no fairer trace
Of wit than puns, of humour than grimace.

Then let Ausonia, skill'd in every art

To soften manners, but corrupt the heart,
Pour her exotic follies o'er the town,

To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum
down: 621

Let wedded strumpets languish o'er Des-
hayes,

And bless the promise which his form dis-
plays;

While Gayton bounds before th' enrapt-
ured looks 624

Of hoary marquises and stripling dukes:
Let high-born lechers eye the lively Présle

Twirl her light limbs, that spurn the need-
less veil;

Let Angiolini bare her breast of snow,
Wave the white arm, and point the pliant
toe;

Collini trill her love-inspiring song, 630
Strain her fair neck, and charm the listen-
ing throng!

Whet not your scythe, suppressors of our
vice!

Reforming saints! too delicately nice!
By whose decrees, our sinful souls to save,

No Sunday tankards foam, no barbers
shave; 635

And beer undrawn, and beards unshown,
display

Your holy reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Or hail at once the patron and the pile
Of vice and folly, Gréville and Argyle!

Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hal-
low'd fane, 640

Spreads wide her portals for the motley
train,

Behold the new Petronius of the day,
Our arbiter of pleasure and of play!

There the hired eunuch, the Hesperian
choir, 644

The melting lute, the soft lascivious lyre,
The song from Italy, the step from
France,

The midnight orgy, and the mazy dance,
The smile of beauty, and the flush of
wine,

For fops, fools, gamesters, knaves, and
lords combine:

Each to his humour—Comus all allows;
Champaign, dice, music, or your neigh-
bour's spouse. 651

Talk not to us, ye starving sons of trade!
Of piteous ruin, which ourselves have
made;

In plenty's sunshine Fortune's minions
bask,

Nor think of poverty, except 'en masque,'
When for the night some lately titled ass
Appears the beggar which his grandsire
was. 657

The curtain dropp'd, the gay burletta o'er,
The audience take their turn upon the
floor;

Now round the room the circling dow'gers
sweep, 660

Now in loose waltz the thin-clad daughters
leap;

The first in lengthen'd line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfetter'd limb!

Those for Hibernia's lusty sons repair
With art the charms which nature could
not spare; 665

These after husbands wing their eager
flight,

Nor leave much mystery for the nuptial
night.

Oh! blest retreats of infamy and ease,
Where, all forgotten but the power to
please,

Each maid may give a loose to genial
thought, 670

Each swain may teach new systems, or be
taught:

There the blithe youngster, just return'd
from Spain,

Cuts the light pack, or calls the rattling
main;

The jovial caster's set, and seven's the
nick,

Or—done!—a thousand on the coming
trick! 675

If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
And all your hope or wish is to expire,

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Here's Powell's pistol ready for your
life,
And, kinder still, two Pagets for your
wife; 679

Fit consummation of an earthly race
Begun in folly, ended in disgrace;
While none but menials o'er the bed of
death,
Wash thy red wounds, or watch thy waver-
ing breath:
Traduced by liars, and forgot by all,
The mangled victim of a drunken brawl,
To live like Clodius, and like Falkland
fall. 686

Truth! rouse some genuine bard, and
guide his hand
To drive this pestilence from out the land.
E'en I—least thinking of a thoughtless
throng,

Just skill'd to know the right and choose
the wrong, 690

Freed at that age when reason's shield is
lost,
To fight my course through passion's
countless host,

Whom every path of pleasure's flowery
way
Has lured in turn, and all have led astray—
E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must
feel 695

Such scenes, such men, destroy the public
weal:
Although some kind, censorious friend
will say,
'What art thou better, meddling fool, than
they?'

And every brother rake will smile to see
That miracle, a moralist in me. 700
No matter—when some bard in virtue
strong,

Gifford perchance, shall raise the chasten-
ing song,

Then sleep my pen for ever! and my voice
Be only heard to hail him, and rejoice;
Rejoice, and yield my feeble praise, though
I 705

May feel the lash that Virtue must apply.

As for the smaller fry, who swarm in
shoals,

From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles,
Why should we call them from their dark
abode,

In broad St. Giles's or in Tottenham-
road? 710

Or (since some men of fashion nobly dare
To scrawl in verse) from Bond-street or the
Square?

If things of ton their harmless lays indite,
Most wisely doom'd to shun the public
sight, 714

What harm? in spite of every critic elf,
Sir T. may read his stanzas to himself;

Miles Andrews still his strength in coup-
lets try,

And live in prologues, though his dramas
die:

Lords too are bards, such things at times
befall, 719

And 'tis some praise in peers to write at all.
Yet, did or taste or reason sway the times
Ah! who would take their titles with their
rhymes?

Roscommon! Sheffield! with your spirits
fled,

No future laurels deck a noble head;
No muse will cheer, with renovating smile,
The paralytic puling of Carlisle. 726

The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the senior's ceaseless
verse,

Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes
grow worse? 730

What heterogeneous honours deck the
peer!

Lord, rhymester, petit-maitre, and pamph-
leteer!

So dull in youth, so drivelling in his
age,

His scenes alone had damn'd our sinking
stage;

But managers for once cried, 'Hold,
enough!' 735

Nor drugs'd their audience with the tragic
stuff.

Yet at their judgment let his lordship
laugh,

And case his volumes in congenial calf;
Yes! doff that covering, where morocco
shines,

And hang a calf-skin on those recreant
lines. 740

With you, ye Druids! rich in native lead,
Who daily scribble for your daily bread;
With you I war not: Gifford's heavy hand
Has crush'd, without remorse, your num-
erous band. 744

On 'all the talents' vent your venal spleen;
Want is your plea, let pity be your screen.
Let monodies on Fox regale your crew,
And Melville's Mantle prove a blanket
too!

One common Lethe waits each hapless
bard,

And, peace be with you! 'tis you best re-
ward. 750

Such damning fame as Dunciads only give
Could bid your lines beyond a morning
live;

But now at once your fleeting labours
close,

With names of greater note in blest re-
pose. 754

Far be't from me unkindly to upbraid
The lovely Rosa's prose in masquerade,

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her
mind,
Leave wondering comprehension far be-
hind.
Though Crusca's bards no more our
journals fill,
Some stragglers skirmish round the col-
umns still; 760
Last of the howling host which once was
Bell's,
Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz yells;
And Merry's metaphors appear anew,
Chain'd to the signature of O. P. Q.

When some brisk youth, the tenant of a
stall, 765
Employs a pen less pointed than his awl,
Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store
of shoes,
St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the
muse,
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how
crowds applaud!
How ladies read, and literati laud! 770
If chance some wicked wag should pass
his jest,
'Tis sheer ill-nature—don't the world
know best?
Genius must guide when wits admire the
rhyme,
And Capel Loft declares 'tis quite sub-
lime.
Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless
trade! 775
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless
spade!
Lo! Burns and Bloomfield, nay, a greater
far,
Gifford was born beneath an adverse
star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemm'd the rude storm, and triumph'd
over fate: 780
Then why no more? if Phœbus smiled on
you,
Bloomfield! why not on brother Nathan
too?
Him too the mania, not the muse, has
seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no boor can seek his last abode,
No common be enclosed without an ode.
Oh! since increased refinement deigns to
smile
On Britain's sons, and bless our genial
isle, 788
Let poetry go forth, pervade the whole,
Alike the rustic, and mechanic soul!
Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes pro-
long,
Compose at once a slipper and a song;
So shall the fair your handywork peruse,
Your sonnets sure shall please—perhaps
your shoes.

May Moorland weavers boast Pindaric
skill, 795
And tailors' lays be longer than their
bill!
While punctual beaux reward the grateful
notes,
And pay for poems—when they pay for
coats.

To the famed throng now paid the trib-
ute due,
Neglected genius! let me turn to you.
Come forth, oh Campbell! give thy talents
scope; 801
Who dares aspire if thou must cease to
hope?
And thou, melodious Rogers! rise at
last,
Recall the pleasing memory of the
past;
Arise! let blest remembrance still in-
spire, 805
And strike to wonted tones thy hallow'd
lyre;
Restore Apollo to his vacant throne,
Assert thy country's honour and thine
own.
What! must deserted Poesy still weep
Where her last hopes with pious Cowper
sleep? 810
Unless, perchance, from his cold bier she
turns,
To deck the turf that wraps her minstrel,
Burns!
No! though contempt hath mark'd the
spurious brood,
The race who rhyme from folly, or for
food,
Yet still some genuine sons 'tis hers to
boast, 815
Who, least affecting, still affect the most:
Feel as they write, and write but as they
feel—
Bear witness Gifford, Sotheby, Macneil.

'Why slumbers Gifford?' once was
ask'd in vain; 819
Why slumbers Gifford? let us ask again.
Are there no follies for his pen to purge?
Are there no fools whose backs demand
the scourge?
Are there no sins for satire's bard to
greet?
Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
Shall peers or princes tread pollution's
path, 825
And 'scape alike the law's and muse's
wrath?
Nor blaze with guilty glare through future
time,
Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
Arouse thee, Gifford! be thy promise
claim'd, 829
Make bad men better, or at least ashamed.

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Unhappy White! while life was in its
 spring,
 And thy young muse just waved her joy-
 ous wing,
 The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
 Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
 Oh! what a noble heart was here un-
 done, 835
 When Science' self destroy'd her favourite
 son!
 Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pur-
 suit,
 She sow'd the seeds, but death has reap'd
 the fruit.
 'Twas thine own genius gave the final
 blow,
 And help'd to plant the wound that laid
 thee low: 840
 So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the
 plain,
 No more through rolling clouds to soar
 again,
 View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
 And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his
 heart;
 Keen were his pangs, but keener far to
 feel 845
 He nursed the pinion which impell'd the
 steel;
 While the same plumage that had warm'd
 his nest
 Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding
 breast.

 There be who say, in these enlighten'd
 days, 849
 That splendid lies are all the poet's praise;
 That strain'd invention, ever on the wing,
 Alone impels the modern bard to sing:
 'Tis true, that all who rhyme—nay, all who
 write,
 Shrink from that fatal word to genius—
 trite;
 Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest
 fires, 855
 And decorate the verse herself inspires:
 This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe
 attest;
 Though nature's sternest painter, yet the
 best.

 And here let Shee and Genius find a
 place,
 Whose pen and pencil yield an equal
 grace; 860
 To guide whose hand the sister arts com-
 bine,
 And trace the poet's or the painter's line;
 Whose magic touch can bid the canvas
 glow,
 Or pour the easy rhyme's harmonious
 flow; 864
 While honours, doubly merited, attend
 The poet's rival, but the painter's friend.

Blest is the man who dares approach
 the bower
 Where dwell the muses at their natal hour;
 Whose steps have press'd, whose eye has
 mark'd afar,
 The clime that nursed the sons of song and
 war, 870
 The scenes which glory still must hover
 o'er,
 Her place of birth, her own Achaian shore.
 But doubly blest is he whose heart ex-
 pands
 With hallow'd feelings for those classic
 lands; 874
 Who rends the veil of ages long gone by,
 And views their remnants with a poet's eye!
 Wright! 'twas thy happy lot at once to view
 Those shores of glory, and to sing them
 too;
 And sure no common muse inspired thy
 pen 879
 To hail the land of gods and godlike men.

 And you, associate bards! who snatch'd
 to light
 Those gems too long withheld from
 modern sight;
 Whose mingling taste combined to cull the
 wreath
 Where Attic flowers Anion odours
 breathe, 884
 And all their renovated fragrance flung
 To grace the beauties of your native
 tongue;
 Now let those minds, that nobly could
 transfuse
 The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,
 Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow'd
 tone:
 Resign Achaia's lyre, and strike your own.

 Let these, or such as these, with just
 applause, 891
 Restore the muse's violated laws;
 But not in flimsy Darwin's pompous
 chime,
 That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,
 Whose gilded cymbals, more adorn'd than
 clear, 895
 The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear;
 In show the simple lyre could once sur-
 pass,
 But now, worn down, appear in native
 brass;
 While all his train of hovering sylphs
 around
 Evaporate in similes and sound: 900
 Him let them shun, with him let tinsel
 die:
 False glare attracts, but more offends the
 eye.

 Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth
 stoop,
 The meanest object of the lowly group,

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Whose verse, of all but childish prattle
void,⁹⁰⁵
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and
Lloyd:
Let them—but hold, my muse, nor dare to
teach
A strain far, far beyond thy humble reach:
The native genius with their being given
Will point the path, and peal their notes to
heaven.⁹¹⁰

And thou, too, Scott! resign to minstrels
rude
The wilder slogan of a border feud:
Let others spin their meagre lines for
hire;
Enough for genius, if itself inspire!
Let Southey sing, although his teeming
muse,⁹¹⁵
Prolific every spring, be too profuse;
Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish
verse,
And brother Coleridge lull the babe at
nurse;
Let spectre-mongering Lewis aim, at most,
To rouse the galleries, or to raise a ghost;
Let Moore still sigh; let Strangford steal
from Moore,⁹²¹
And swear that Camoëns sang such notes
of yore;
Let Hayley hobble on, Montgomery rave,
And godly Grahame chant a stupid
stave:
Let sonneteering Bowles his strains re-
fine,⁹²⁵
And whine and whimper to the fourteenth
line;
Let Stott, Carlisle, Matilda, and the
rest
Of Grub Street, and of Grosvenor Place
the best,
Scrawl on, till death release us from the
strain,
Or Common Sense assert her rights
again.⁹³⁰
But thou, with powers that mock the aid
of praise,
Shouldst leave to humbler bards ignoble
lays:
Thy country's voice, the voice of all the
nine,
Demand a hallow'd harp—that harp is
thine.
Say! will not Caledonia's annals yield
The glorious record of some nobler
field,⁹³⁶
Than the wild foray of a plundering
clan,
Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name
of man?
Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter
food
For Sherwood's outlaw tales of Robin
Hood?⁹⁴⁰

Scotland! still proudly claim thy native
bard,
And be thy praise his first, his best-re-
ward!
Yet not with thee alone his name should
live,
But own the vast renown a world can
give:
Be known, perchance, when Albion is no
more,⁹⁴⁵
And tell the tale of what she was before;
To future times her faded fame re-
call,
And save her glory, though his country
fall.

Yet what avails the sanguine poet's
hope,
To conquer ages, and with time to
cope?⁹⁵⁰
New eras spread their wings, new nations
rise,
And other victors fill the applauding skies;
A few brief generations fleet along,
Whose sons forget the poet and his song:
E'en now, what once-loved minstrels
scarce may claim⁹⁵⁵
The transient mention of a dubious name!
When fame's loud trump hath blown its
noblest blast,
Though long the sound, the echo sleeps
at last;
And glory, like the phoenix midst her
fires,⁹⁵⁹
Exhales her odours, blazes, and expires.

Shall hoary Granta call her sable sons,
Expert in science, more expert at
puns?
Shall these approach the muse? ah, no!
she flies,
Even from the tempting ore of Seaton's
prize;
Though printers condescend the press to
soil⁹⁶⁵
With rhyme by Hoare, and epic blank by
Hoyle:
Not him whose page, if still upheld by
whist,
Requires no sacred theme to bid us
list.
Ye! who in Granta's honours would sur-
pass,
Must mount her Pegasus, a full-grown
ass;⁹⁷⁰
A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.

There Clarke, still striving piteously 'to
please,
Forgetting doggerel leads not to degrees,
A would-be satirist, a hired buffoon,⁹⁷⁵
A monthly scribbler of some low lam-
poon,

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Condemn'd to drudge, the meanest of the
mean,
And furbish falsehoods for a magazine,
Devotes to scandal his congenial mind;
Himself a living libel on mankind. 980

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race!
At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
So lost to Phœbus, that nor Hodgson's
verse
Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's
worse.
But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
The partial muse delighted loves to
lave; 986
On her green banks a greener wreath she
wove,
To crown the bards that haunt her classic
grove:
Where Richards wakes a genuine poet's
fires,
And modern Britons glory in their sires.

For me, who, thus unask'd, have dared to
tell 991
My country what her sons should know
too well,
Zeal for her honour bade me here en-
gage
The host of idiots that infest her age;
No just applause her honour'd name shall
lose, 995
As first in freedom, dearest to the muse.
Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy
fame,
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy
name!
What Athens was in science, Rome in
power,
What Tyre appear'd in her meridian
hour, 1000
'Tis thine at once, fair Albion! to have
been—
Earth's chief dictatress, ocean's lovely
queen:
But Rome decay'd, and Athens strew'd the
plain,
And Tyre's proud piers lie shatter'd in the
main;
Like these, thy strength may sink, in ruin
hurl'd, 1005
And Britain fall, the bulwark of the
world.
But let me cease, and dread Cassandra's
fate,
With warning ever scoff'd at, till too late;
To themes less lofty still my lay con-
fine,
And urge thy bards to gain a name like
thine. 1010
Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers
blest,
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!

Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of
sense,
While Canning's colleagues hate him for
his wit, 1015
And old dame Portland fills the place of
Pitt.

Yet once again, adieu! ere this the
sail
That wafts me hence is shivering in the
gale;
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse
height,
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my
sight: 1020
Thence shall I stray through beauty's
native clime,
Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crown'd
with snows sublime.
But should I back return, no tempting
press
Shall drag my journal from the desk's re-
cess;
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from
far, 1025
Snatch his own wreath of ridicule from
Carr;
Let Aberdeen and Elgin still pursue
The shade of fame through regions of
virtù;
Waste useless thousands on their Phidian
freaks,
Misshapen monuments and maim'd an-
tiques; 1030
And make their grand saloons a general
mart
For all the mutilated blocks of art:
Of Dardan tours let dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid Gell;
And, quite content, no more shall inter-
pose 1035
To stun the public ear—at least with
prose.

Thus far I've held my undisturb'd ca-
reer,
Prepared for rancour, steel'd 'gainst selfish
fear:
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdain'd to
own—
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite un-
known: 1040
My voice was heard again, though not so
loud,
My page, though nameless, never dis-
avow'd;
And now at once I tear the veil away:—
Cheer on the pack! the quarry stands at
bay,
Unscared by all the din of Melbourne
House, 1045
By Lambe's resentment, or by Holland's
spouse,

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

By Jeffrey's harmless pistol, Hallam's
 rage,
 Edina's brawny sons and brimstone
 page.
 Our men in buckram shall have blows
 enough,
 And feel they too are 'penetrable
 stuff':
 And though I hope not hence unscathed
 to go,
 Who conquers me shall find a stubborn
 foe.
 The time hath been, when no harsh sound
 would fall
 From lips that now may seem imbued with
 gall;
 Nor fools nor follies tempt me to
 despise
 The meanest thing that crawl'd beneath
 my eyes:
 But now, so callous grown, so changed
 since youth,
 I've learn'd to think, and sternly speak the
 truth;
 Learn'd to deride the critic's starch de-
 cree,
 And break him on the wheel he meant for
 me;
 To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me
 kiss,
 Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or
 hiss:
 Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters
 frown,
 I too can hunt a poetaster down;
 And, arm'd in proof, the gauntlet cast at
 once
 To Scotch marauder, and to southern
 dunce.
 Thus much I've dared; if my incondite
 lay
 Hath wrong'd these righteous times, let
 others say;
 This, let the world, which knows not how
 to spare,
 Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND EDITION

I HAVE been informed, since the present edition went to the press, that my trusty and well-beloved cousins, the Edinburgh Reviewers, are preparing a most vehement critique on my poor, gentle, *unre-sisting* Muse, whom they have already so be-devilled with their ungodly ribaldry:

'Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!'

I suppose I must say of Jeffrey as Sir Andrew Aguecheek saith, 'An I had known he was so cunning of fence, I had seen him damned ere I had fought him.' What a pity it is that I shall be beyond the Bosphorus before the next number has passed the Tweed! But I yet hope to light my pipe with it in Persia.

My northern friends have accused me, with justice, of personality towards their great literary anthropophagus, Jeffrey; but what else was to be done with him and his dirty pack, who feed by 'lying and slandering,' and slake their thirst by 'evil speaking'? I have adduced facts already well known, and of Jeffrey's mind I have stated my free opinion, nor has he thence sustained any injury;—what scavenger was ever soiled by being pelted with mud? It may be said that I quit England because I have censured there 'persons of honour and wit about town'; but I am coming back again, and their vengeance will keep hot till my return. Those who know me can testify that my motives for leaving England are very different from fears, literary or personal: those who do not, may one day be convinced. Since the publication of this thing, my name has not been concealed; I have been mostly in London, ready to answer for my transgressions, and in daily expectation of sundry cartels; but, alas! 'the age of chivalry is over,' or, in the vulgar tongue, there is no spirit now-a-days.

There is a youth ycleped Hewson Clarke (sub-aud. *esquire*), a sizer of Emanuel College, and, I believe, a denizen of Berwick-upon-Tweed, whom I have introduced in these pages to much better company than he has been accustomed to meet; he is, notwithstanding, a very sad dog, and for no reason that I can discover, except a personal quarrel with a bear, kept by me at Cambridge to sit for a fellowship, and whom the jealousy of his Trinity contemporaries prevented from success, has been abusing me, and, what is worse, the defenceless innocent above mentioned, in 'The Satirist,' for one year and some months. I am utterly unconscious of having given him any provocation; indeed, I am guiltless of having heard his name, till coupled with 'The Satirist.' He has therefore no reason to complain, and I dare say that, like Sir Fretful Plagiary, he is rather *pleased* than otherwise. I have now mentioned all who have done me the honour to notice me and mine, that is, my bear and my book, except the editor of 'The Satirist,' who, it seems, is a gentleman—God wot! I wish he could impart a little of his gentility to his subordinate scribblers. I hear that Mr. Jerminham is about to take up the cudgels for his Mæcenas, Lord Carlisle. I hope not: he was one of the few, who, in the very short intercourse I had with him, treated me with kindness when a boy; and whatever he may say or do, 'pour on, I will endure.' I have nothing further to add, save a general note of thanksgiving to readers, purchasers, and publishers, and, in the words of Scott, I wish

*'To all and each a fair good night,
 And rosy dreams and slumbers light.'*

HINTS FROM HORACE

BEING AN ALLUSION IN ENGLISH VERSE TO THE EPISTLE 'AD PISONES,
DE ARTE POETICA,' AND INTENDED AS A SEQUEL TO 'ENGLISH BARDS
AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS'

—'Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quae ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi'

HOR. *De Arte Poet.*

'Rhymes are difficult things—they are stubborn things, sir.'

FIELDING'S *Amelia*.

ATHENS: CAPUCHIN CONVENT,
March 12, 1811.

Who would not laugh, if Lawrence, hired
to grace

His costly canvas with each flatter'd face,
Abused his art, till Nature, with a blush,
Saw cits grow centaurs underneath his
brush?

Or, should some limner join, for show or
sale,

A maid of honour to a mermaid's tail?
Or low Dubost—as once the world has
seen—

Degrade God's creatures in his graphic
spleen?

Not all that forced politeness, which de-
fends

Fools in their faults, could gag his grin-
ning friends.

Believe me, Moschus, like that picture
seems

The book which, sillier than a sick man's
dreams,

Displays a crowd of figures incomplete,
Poetic nightmares, without head or feet.

Poets and painters, as all artists know,
May shoot a little with a lengthen'd bow;
We claim this mutual mercy for our task,
And grant in turn the pardon which we
ask;

But make not monsters spring from gen-
tle dams—

Birds breed not vipers, tigers nurse not
lams.

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Iungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne:
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici? 5
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum
Persimilem, cuius, velut aegri somnia, vanae
Fingentur species; ut nec pes nec caput uni
Reddatur formae. Pictoribus atque poëtis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas.
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque
vicissim; 11
Sed non ut placidis coëtant immitia; non ut
Serpentes avibus gementur, tigris agni.
Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna pro-
fessis,

A labour'd, long exordium, sometimes
tends

(Like patriot speeches) but to paltry ends;
And nonsense in a lofty note goes down,
As pertness passes with a legal gown:

Thus many a bard describes in pompous
strain 25

The clear brook babbling through the
goodly plain:

The groves of Granta, and her Gothic
halls,

King's Coll., Cam's stream, stain'd win-
dows, and old walls:

Or, in advent'rous numbers, neatly aims
To paint a rainbow, or—the river Thames.

You sketch a tree, and so perhaps may
shine— 31

But daub a shipwreck like an alehouse
sign;

You plan a vase—it dwindles to a pot;
Then glide down Grub-street—fasting and
forgot;

Laugh'd into Lethe by some quaint Re-
view, 35

Whose wit is never troublesome till—true.

In fine, to whatsoever you aspire,
Let it at least be simple and entire.

The greater portion of the rhyming
tribe

(Give ear, my friend, for thou hast been a
scribe) 40

Are led astray by some peculiar lure.
I labour to be brief—become obscure;

Purpureus, late qui splendeat, unus et alter 15
Assuitur pannus; cum lucus et ara Dianae,
Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus
agros,

Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur
arcus.

Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortasse cupres-
sum 19

Scis simulare: quid hoc, si fractis enatat expes
Navibus, aere dato qui pingitur? amphora
coept

Institui; currente rota cur urceus exit?
Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum.

Maxima pars vatium, pater et juvenes patre
digni,

Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro, 25

HINTS FROM HORACE

One falls while following elegance too fast;
Another soars, inflated with bombast;
Too low a third crawls on, afraid to fly,
He spins his subject to satiety; 46
Absurdly varying, he at last engraves
Fish in the woods, and boars beneath the waves!

Unless your care's exact, your judgment nice,
The flight from folly leads but into vice;
None are complete, all wanting in some part, 51
Like certain tailors, limited in art.
For galligaskins Slowshears is your man;
But coats must claim another artisan.
Now this to me, I own, seems much the same 55
As Vulcan's feet to bear Apollo's frame;
Or, with a fair complexion, to expose
Black eyes, black ringlets, but—a bottle nose!

Dear authors! suit your topics to your strength,
And ponder well your subject and its length; 60
Nor lift your load before you're quite aware
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.
But lucid Order, and Wit's siren voice,
Await the poet, skilful in his choice;
With native eloquence he soars along,
Grace in his thoughts, and music in his song. 66

Let judgment teach them wisely to combine
With future parts the now omitted line:
This shall the author choose, or that reject, 69
Precise in style, and cautious to select;

Obscurus fio: sectantem levius, nervi
Deficient animique: professus grandia, turget:
Serpit humi, tutus nimium, timidusque procellae:

Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum sylvia appingit, fluctibus aprum. 30
In vitium ducit culpae fuga, si caret arte.
Aemilium circa ludum faber unus et unguis
Expriimet, et molles imitabitur aere capillos;
Infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum
Nesciet. Hunc ego me, si quid componere curem, 35

Non magis esse velim, quam pravo vivere naso,
Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.
Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, aequum
Viribus; et versate diu quid ferre recusent 39
Quid valeant humeri. Cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.

Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,
Ut iam nunc dicat, iam nunc debentia dici
Pleraque differat, et praesens in tempus omittat;
In verbis etiam tenuis cautisque serendis: 45
Hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor.
Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum

Nor slight applause will candid pens afford
To him who furnishes a wanting word.
Then fear not, if 'tis needful, to produce
Some term unknown, or obsolete in use,
(As Pitt has furnish'd us a word or two,
Which lexicographers declined to do;) 46
So you indeed, with care,—(but be content
To take this license rarely)—may invent.

New words find credit in these latter days,
If neatly grafted on a Gallic phrase. 80
What Chaucer, Spenser did, we scarce
refuse

To Dryden's or to Pope's maturer muse.
If you can add a little, say why not,
As well as William Pitt, and Walter Scott?
Since they, by force of rhyme and force of lungs, 85
Enrich'd our island's ill-united tongues;
'Tis then—and shall be—lawful to present
Reform in writing, as in parliament.

As forests shed their foliage by degrees,
So fade expressions which in season please; 90

And we and ours, alas! are due to fate,
And works and words but dwindle to a date.

Though as a monarch nods, and commerce calls,
Impetuous rivers stagnate in canals;
Though swamps subdued, and marshes drain'd, sustain 95

The heavy ploughshare and the yellow grain,

And rising ports along the busy shore
Protect the vessel from old Ocean's roar,
All, all, must perish; but, surviving last,
The love of letters half preserves the past.
True, some decay, yet not a few revive;
Though those shall sink, which now appear to thrive, 102

Reddiderit iunctura novum. Si forte necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis 50
Continget; dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter;
Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Graeco fonte cadant, parce detorta. Quid autem
Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum
Virgilio Varioque? ego cur, acquirere pauca 55
Si possum, invidior; cum lingua Catonis et Enni
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit,
Signatum praesente nota producere nomen. 59

Ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos;
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
Et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata, vigentque.
Debemur morti nos, nostraque: sive receptus
Terra Neptunus classes Aquilonibus arceat,
Regis opus; sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum: 66
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus annis,
Doctus iter melius; mortalia facta peribunt:
Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax.
Multa renascentur, quae iam cecidere; cadent-
que, 70

HINTS FROM HORACE

As custom arbitrates, whose shifting
away
Our life and language must alike obey.

The immortal wars which gods and
angels wage, 105
Are they not shown in Milton's sacred
page?
His strain will teach what numbers best
belong
To themes celestial: told in epic song.

The slow, sad stanza will correctly
paint
The lover's anguish, or the friend's com-
plaint. 110
But which deserves the laurel—rhyme or
blank?
Which holds on Helicon the higher rank?
Let squabbling critics by themselves dis-
pute
This point, as puzzling as a Chancery
suit.

Satiric rhyme first sprang from selfish
spleen. 115
You doubt—see Dryden, Pope, St. Pat-
rick's dean.

Blank verse is now, with one consent,
allied
To Tragedy, and rarely quits her side.
Though mad Almanzor rhymed in Dry-
den's days, 119
No sing-song hero rants in modern plays;
While modest Comedy her verse fore-

For jest and pun in very middling prose.
Not that our Bens or Beaumonts show the
worse,
Or lose one point, because they wrote in
verse.
But so Thalia pleases to appear, 125
Poor virgin! damn'd some twenty times
a year!

Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet
usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et ius, et norma
loquendi.

Res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella,
Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Ho-
merus.

Verbis impariter iunctis querimonia pri-
mum: 75

Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.
Quis tamen exiguus elegos emisit auctor,
Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub iudice lis est.
Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo;
Hunc socci cepere pedem grandaeque cothurni,
Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populares 81
Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.

Musa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine pri-
mum,

Et iuvenum curas, et libera vina referre. 85
Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?

Whate'er the scene, let this advice have
weight:—

Adapt your language to your hero's state.
At times Melpomene forgets to groan,
And brisk Thalia takes a serious tone;
Nor unregarded will the act pass by 131
Where angry Townly lifts his voice on
high.
Again our Shakspeare limits verse to
kings,
When common prose will serve for com-
mon things;
And lively Hal resigns heroic ire, 135
To 'hollowing Hotspur' and the sceptred
sire.

'Tis not enough, ye bards, with all your
art,
To polish poems; they must touch the
heart:
Where'er the scene be laid, whate'er the
song,
Still let it bear the hearer's soul along;
Command your audience or to smile or
weep, 141
Whiche'er may please you—anything but
sleep.
The poet claims our tears; but, by his
leave,
Before I shed them, let me see him grieve.

If banish'd Romeo feign'd nor sigh nor
tear, 145
Lull'd by his languor, I should sleep or
sneer.
Sad words, no doubt, become a serious
face,
And men look angry in the proper place.
At double meanings folks seem wondrous
sly,
And sentiment prescribes a pensive eye;
For nature form'd at first the inward
man, 151
And actors copy nature—when they can.

Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?

Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult;
Indignatur item privatis, ac prope socco 90
Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyestae.

Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decenter
Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,
Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore:

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.
Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul, uterque
Proicit ampullas, et sesquipedalia verba, 97
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia
sunt,

Et quocumque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adsunt 101
Humani vultus; si vis me flere dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi; tunc tua me infortunia laedent,
Telephe, vel Peleu; male si mandata loqueris
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo: tristitia moestum
Vultum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dictu. 107
Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem

HINTS FROM HORACE

She bids the beating heart with rapture bound,
 Raised to the stars, or levell'd with the ground;
 And for expression's aid, 'tis said, or sung,
 She gave our mind's interpreter—the tongue,
 Who, worn with use, of late would fain dispense
 (At least in theatres) with common sense;
 O'erwhelm with sound the boxes, gallery, pit,
 And raise a laugh with anything—but wit.

To skilful writers it will much import,
 Whence spring their scenes, from common life or court;
 Whether they seek applause by smile or tear,
 To draw a 'Lying Valet,' or a 'Lear,'
 A sage, or rakish youngster wild from school,
 A wandering 'Peregrine,' or plain 'John Bull';
 All persons please when nature's voice prevails,
 Scottish or Irish, born in Wilts or Wales.

Or follow common fame, or forge a plot;
 Who cares if mimic heroes lived or not?
 One precept serves to regulate the scene:—
 Make it appear as if it *might* have been.

If some Drawcansir you aspire to draw,
 Present him raving, and above all law:
 If female furies in your scheme are plann'd,
 Macbeth's fierce dame is ready to your hand;

For tears and treachery, for good and evil,
 Constance, King Richard, Hamlet, and the Devil!

But if a new design you dare essay,
 And freely wander from the beaten way,

Fortunarum habitum; iuvat, aut impellit ad iram;

Aut ad humum moerere gravi deducit, et angit;
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.

Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,
 Romani tollent equites, pedesque cacinnum.

Interit multum, Davusne loquatur an heros;
 Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente iuventa

Fervidus; an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;
 Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;

Colchus an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.
 Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia

fige,
 Scriptor. Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem;

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
 Iura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.

Sit Medea ferox invictaque; flebilis Ixo;
 Perfidus Ixion; Io vaga; tristis Orestes.

Si quid inexpertum scenae committis, et audes
 Personam formare novam: servetur ad imum

Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.
 Difficile est proprie communia dicere: tuque

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,

True to your characters, till all be past,
 Preserve consistency from first to last.

'Tis hard to venture where our betters fail,

Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale;
 And yet, perchance, 'tis wiser to prefer

A hackney'd plot, than choose a new, and err;

Yet copy not too closely, but record,
 More justly, thought for thought than

word for word;
 Nor trace your prototype through narrow

ways,
 But only follow where he merits praise.

For you, young bard! whom luckless fate may lead

To tremble on the nod of all who read,
 Ere your first score of cantos time unrolls,

Beware—for God's sake, don't begin like Bowles!

'Awake a louder and a loftier strain,'—
 And pray, what follows from his boiling

brain?—
 He sinks to Southey's level in a trice,

Whose epic mountains never fail in mice!
 Not so of yore awoke your mighty sire

The temper'd warblings of his master-lyre;

Soft as the gentle breathing of the lute,
 'Of man's first disobedience and the fruit'

He speaks, but, as his subject swells along,
 Earth, Heaven, and Hades echo with the

song.
 Still to the midst of things he hastens on,

As if we witness'd all already done;
 Leaves on his path whatever seems too

mean
 To raise the subject, or adorn the scene;

Gives, as each page improves upon the sight,
 Not smoke from brightness, but from

darkness—light;

Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.
 Publica materies privati iuris erit, si

Nec circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
 Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus

Interpres, nec desiles imitator in arcum
 Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet, aut operis lex.

Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor Cyclicus olim: 136
 'Fortunam Priami cantabo, et nobile bellum.'

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?
 Parturiunt montes: nascetur ridiculus mus.

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte! 140
 'Dic mihi, Musa, virum, captae post tempora

Troiae,
 Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes.'

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
 Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.

Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cyclope Char-rybdin.

Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
 Nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo.

Semper ad eventum festinat; et in medias res
 Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit, et quae

Desperat tractata nitescere posse, reliquit: 150

HINTS FROM HORACE

And truth and fiction with such art compounds,
 We know not where to fix their several bounds.
 If you would please the public, deign to hear
 What soothes the many-headed monster's ear:
 If your heart triumph when the hands of all
 Applaud in thunder at the curtain's fall,
 Deserve those plaudits—study nature's page,
 And sketch the striking traits of every age;
 While varying man and varying years unfold
 Life's little tale, so oft, so vainly told; 220
 Observe his simple childhood's dawning days,
 His pranks, his prate, his playmates, and his plays;
 Till time at length the mannish tyro weans,
 And prurient vice outstrips his tardy teens!

Behold him Freshman! forced no more
 to groan 225
 O'er Virgil's devilish verses and his own;
 Prayers are too tedious, lectures too abstruse,
 He flies from Tavell's frown to 'Fordham's Mews';
 (Unlucky Tavell! doom'd to daily cares
 By pugilistic pupils, and by bears,) 230
 Fines, tutors, tasks, conventions threat in vain,
 Before hounds, hunters, and Newmarket plain.
 Rough with his elders, with his equals rash,
 Civil to sharpers, prodigal of cash;
 Constant to nought—save hazard and a whore, 235
 Yet cursing both—for both have made him sore;
 Unread (unless, since books beguile
 The p—x becomes his passage to degrees);
 Fool'd, pillaged, dunn'd, he wastes his term away,
 And unexpell'd, perhaps, retires M.A.;

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscit,
 Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.
 Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret,
 audi.
 Si plausoris egres aulae manentis, et usque
 Sessuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat; 155
 Aetatis cuiusque notandi sunt tibi mores,
 Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.
 Reddere qui voces iam scit puer, et pede certo
 Signat humum: gestit paribus colludere, et iram
 Colligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas.
 Imberbus juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
 Gaudet equis canibusque, et aprici gramine
 campi;
 Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,
 Utillum tardus provisor, prodigus aeris,

Master of arts! as *hells* and *clubs* proclaim,
 Where scarce a blackleg bears a brighter name! 241

Launch'd into life, extinct his early fire,
 He apes the selfish prudence of his sire;
 Marries for money, chooses friends for rank; 245
 Buys land, and shrewdly trusts not to the Bank;
 Sits in the Senate; gets a son and heir;
 Sends him to Harrow, for himself was there.
 Mute, though he votes, unless when call'd to cheer,
 His son's so sharp—he'll see the dog a peer! 250

Manhood declines—age palsies every limb;
 He quits the scene—or else the scene quits him;
 Scrapes wealth, o'er each departing penny grieves,
 And avarice seizes all ambition leaves;
 Counts cent. per cent., and smiles, or vainly frets, 255
 O'er hoards diminish'd by young Hopeful's debts;
 Weighs well and wisely what to sell or buy,
 Complete in all life's lessons—but to die;
 Peevish and spiteful, doting, hard to please,
 Commending every time, save times like these; 260
 Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half forgot,
 Expires unwept—is buried—let him rot!

But from the Drama let me not digress,
 Nor spare my precepts, though they please you less.
 Though woman weep, and hard est hearts are stirr'd, 265
 When what is done is rather seen than heard,
 Yet many deeds preserved in history's

Are told than acted on the stage;
 Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix. 165
 Conversis studiis, aetas animusque virilis
 Quaerit opes et amicitias, inservit honori;
 Commisisse cavet quod mox mutare laboret.
 Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod 169
 Quaerit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti;
 Vel quod res omnes timide gelideque ministrat,
 Dilator, spe longus, iners, avidusque futuri.
 Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
 Se puero, castigator censorque minorum. 174
 Multa ferunt anni venientes comoda secum,
 Multa recedentes adimunt. Ne forte seniles
 Mandentur iuveni partes, pueroque viriles,
 Semper in adiunctis, aevoque morabimur aptis.

HINTS FROM HORACE

The ear sustains what shocks the timid eye,
And horror thus subsides to sympathy.
True Briton all beside, I here am French—
Bloodshed 'tis surely better to retrench;
The gladiatorial gore we teach to flow
In tragic scene disgusts, though but in
show;

We hate the carnage while we see the
trick, 275

And find small sympathy in being sick.
Not on the stage the regicide Macbeth
Appals an audience with a monarch's death;
To gaze when sable Hubert threatens to scar
Young Arthur's eyes, can *ours* or *nature*
bear? 280

A halter'd heroine Johnson sought to slay—
We saved Irene, but half damn'd the play,
And (Heaven be praised!) our tolerating
times

Stint metamorphoses to pantomimes;
And Lewis' self, with all his sprites, would
quake 285

To change Earl Osmond's negro to a snake!
Because, in scenes exciting joy or grief,
We loathe the action which exceeds belief:
And yet, God knows! what may not
authors do,

Whose postscripts, prate of dyeing
'heroines blue?' 290

Above all things, *Dan Poet*, if you can,
Eke out your acts, I pray, with mortal man,
Nor call a ghost, unless some cursed scrape
Must open ten trap-doors for your escape.
Of all the monstrous things I'd fain for-
bid, 295

I loathe an opera worse than Dennis did;
Where good and evil persons, right or
wrong,
Rage, love, and aught but moralise, in
song.

Hail, last memorial of our foreign friends,
Which Gaul allows, and still *Hesperia*
lends! 300

Napoleon's edicts no embargo lay
On whores, spies, singers, wisely shipp'd
away.

Our giant capital, whose squares are
spread

Where rustics earn'd, and now may beg,
their bread,

In all iniquity is grown so nice, 305
It scorns amusements which are not of
price.

Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem 180
Quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus, et quae
Ipse sibi tradit spectator. Non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in scenam; multaue tolles
Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praesens.
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet; 185
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atræus;
Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Hence the pert shopkeeper, whose throbbing
ear

Aches with orchestras which he pays to
hear,

Whom shame, not sympathy, forbids to
snore,

His anguish doubling by his own 'encore';
Squeezed in 'Fop's Alley,' jostled by the
beaux, 311

Teased with his hat, and trembling for his
toes;

Scarce wrestles through the night, nor
tastes of ease,

Till the dropp'd curtain gives a glad release:
Why this, and more, he suffers—can ye
guess?— 315

Because it costs him dear, and makes him
dress!

So prosper eunuchs from Etruscan
schools;

Give us but fiddlers, and they're sure of
fools!

Ere scenes were play'd by many a reverend
clerk,

(What harm, if David danced before the
ark?) 320

In Christmas revels, simple country folks
Were pleased with morrice-mumm'ry and
coarse jokes.

Improving years, with things no longer
known,

Produced blithe Punch and merry Ma-
dame Joan, 324

Who still frisk on with feats so lowly low,
'Tis strange Benvolio suffers such a show;

Suppressing peer! to whom each vice gives
place,

Oaths, boxing, begging,—all, save rout
and race.

Farce follow'd Comedy, and reach'd
her prime,

In ever-laughing Foote's fantastic time:
Mad wag! who pardon'd none, nor spared
the best, 331

And turn'd some very serious things to jest.
Nor church nor state escaped his public
sneers,

Arms nor the gown, priests, lawyers, vol-
unteers;

'Alas, poor Yorick!' now for ever mute!
Whoever loves a laugh must sigh for
Foote. 336

Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu

Fabula, quae posci vult, et spectata reponi. 190
Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi
quivis 240

Speret idem: sudet multum frustraue labore
Aus idem: tantum series iuncturae pollet;

Tantum de medio sumtis accedit honoris.
Silvis deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,

HINTS FROM HORACE

We smile, perforce, when histrionic
Ape the swoln dialogue of kings and
queens,
When 'Chrononhotonthologos must die,'
And Arthur struts in mimic majesty.

Moschus! with whom once more I hope
to sit, 341
And smile at folly, if we can't at wit;
Yes, friend! for thee I'll quit my cynic cell,
And bear Swift's motto, 'Vive la baga-
telle!'
Which charm'd our days in each Aegean
clime, 345
As oft at home, with revelry and rhyme.
Then may Euphrosyne, who sped the past,
Soothe thy life's scenes, nor leave thee in
the last;
But find in thine, like pagan Plato's bed,
Some merry manuscript of mimes, when
dead. 350

Now to the Drama let us bend our eyes,
Where fetter'd by whig Walpole low she
lies;
Corruption foil'd her, for she fear'd her
glance;
Decorum left her for an opera dance!
Yet Chesterfield, whose polished pen in-
veighs 355
'Gainst laughter, fought for freedom to
our plays;
Uncheck'd by megrims of patrician brains,
And damning dulness of lord chamberlains.
Repeat that act! again let Humour roam
Wild o'er the stage—we've time for tears
at home. 360
Let 'Archer' plant the horns on 'Sullen's'
brows,
And 'Estifania' gull her 'Copper' spouse;
The moral's scant—but that may be ex-
cused,
Men go not to be lectured, but amused.
He whom our plays dispose to good or ill
Must wear a head in want of Willis' skill;
Ay, but Macheath's example—psa!—no
more! 367
It form'd no thieves—the thief was form'd
before;
And, spite of puritans and Collier's curse,
Plays make mankind no better, and no
worse. 370
Then spare our stage, ye methodistic men!
Nor burn damn'd Drury if it rise again.

Ne, velut innati trivis, ac pene forenses, 245
Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus un-
quam,
Aut imunda crepent, ignominiosaeque dicta.
Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, et pater, et
res:
Nec, si quid fracti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,
Aequis accipitur animis, donante corona.
Syllaba longa brevi subiecta vocatur iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam trimetris accrescere iussit

But why to brain-scorch'd bigots thus
appeal?
Can heavenly mercy dwell with earthly
zeal? 374
For times of fire and faggot let them hope!
Times dear alike to puritan or pope.
As pious Calvin saw Servetus blaze,
So would new sects on newer victims gaze.
E'en now the songs of Solyma begin; 379
Faith cants, perplex'd apologist of sin!
While the Lord's servant chastens whom
he loves,
And Simeon kicks, where Baxter only
'shoves.'

Whom nature guides, so writes, that
every dunce,
Enraptured, thinks to do the same at once;
But after inky thumbs and bitten nails,
And twenty scatter'd quires, the coxcomb
fails. 386

Let Pastoral be dumb; for who can hope
To match the youthful eclogues of our
Pope?
Yet his and Phillips' faults, of different
kind, 389
For art too rude, for nature too refined,
Instruct how hard the medium 'tis to hit
'Twixt too much polish and too coarse a
wit.

A vulgar scribbler, certes, stands dis-
graced
In this nice age, when all aspire to taste;
The dirty language, and the noisome jest,
Which pleased in Swift of yore, we now
detest; 396
Proscribed not only in the world polite,
But even too nasty for a city knight!

Peace to Swift's faults! his wit hath
made them pass,
Unmatch'd by all, save matchless Hud-
bras! 400
Whose author is perhaps the first we meet,
Who from our couplet lopp'd two final
feet;
Nor less in merit than the longer line,
This measure moves a favourite of the
Nine.
Though at first view eight feet may seem
in vain 405
Form'd, save in ode, to bear a serious
strain,

Nomen iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus,
Primus ad extremum similis sibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad aures,
Spondeos stabiles in iura paterna recepti 256
Commodus et patiens; non ut de sede secunda
Cederet aut quarta socialiter. Hic et in Acci
Nobilibus trimetris apparet rarus, et Enni.
In scenam missos magno cum pondere versus,
Aut operae celeris nimium, curaque carentis,
Aut ignoratae premit artis crimine turpi. 262

HINTS FROM HORACE

Yet Scott has shown our wondering isle of
late
This measure shrinks not from a theme of
weight,
And, varied skilfully, surpasses far 409
Heroic rhyme, but most in love and war,
Whose fluctuations, tender or sublime,
Are curb'd too much by long-recurring
rhyme.

But many a skilful judge abhors to see,
What few admire—irregularity.
This some vouchsafe to pardon; but 'tis
hard 415
When such a word contents a British bard.

And must the bard his glowing thoughts
confine,
Lest censure hover o'er some faulty line?
Remove whate'er a critic may suspect,
To gain the paltry suffrage of 'correct'?
Or prune the spirit of each daring phrase,
To fly from error, not to merit praise?

Ye, who seek finish'd models, never
cease,
By day and night, to read the works of
Greece.
But our good fathers never bent their
brains 425
To heathen Greek, content with native
strains.
The few who read a page, or used a pen,
Were satisfied with Chaucer and old Ben;
The jokes and numbers suited to their taste
Were quaint and careless, anything but
chaste; 430
Yet whether right or wrong the ancient
rules,
It will not do to call our fathers fools!
Though you and I, who eruditely know
To separate the elegant and low, 434
Can also, when a hobbling line appears,
Detect with fingers, in default of ears.

In sooth I do not know, or greatly care
To learn, who our first English strollers
were;

Non quis videt immodulata poemata iudex;
Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.
Idcircone vager, scribamque licenter? an omnes
Visuros peccata putem mea; tutus, et intra
Spem veniae cautus? vitavi denique culpam,
Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.
At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et 270
Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque,
Ne dicam stulte, mirati; si modo ego et vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,
Legitimisque sonum digitis callemus et aure.
Ignotum tragicas genus invenisse Camoenae
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis,
Quae canerent agerentque peruncti faecibus
ora. 277
Post hunc personae pallaeque repertor honestae

Or if, till roofs received the vagrant art,
Our Muse, like that of Thespis, kept a
cart; 440
But this is certain, since our Shakspeare's
days,
There's pomp enough, if little else, in
plays;
Nor will Melpomene ascend her throne
Without high heels, white plume, and
Bristol stone.

Old comedies still meet with much
applause, 445
Though too licentious for dramatic laws;
At least, we moderns, wisely, 'tis confest,
Curtail, or silence, the lascivious jest.

Whate'er their follies, and their faults
beside,
Our enterprising bards pass nought un-
tried; 450
Nor do they merit slight applause who
choose
An English subject for an English muse,
And leave to minds which never dare invent
French flippancy and German sentiment.
Where is that living language which could
claim 455
Poetic more, as philosophic, fame,
If all our bards, more patient of delay,
Would stop, like Pope, to polish by the
way?

Lords of the quill, whose critical assaults
O'erthrow whole quartos with their quires
of faults, 460
Who soon detect, and mark where'er we
fail,
And prove our marble with too nice a nail!
Democritus himself was not so bad;
He only thought, but you would make, us
mad!

But truth to say, most rhymers rarely
guard 465
Against that ridicule they deem so hard;
In person negligent, they wear, from sloth,
Beards of a week, and nails of annual
growth;

Aeschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnamque loqui, nitiqve cothurno.
Successit vetus his comedia, non sine multa
Laude; sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi; lex est accepta; chorusque
Turpiter obtulit, sublato iure nocendi.
Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetae; 285
Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Graeca
Ausi deserere, et celebrare domestica facta;
Vel qui praetextas, vel qui docuere togatas.
Nec virtute foret clarior potentius armis,
Quam lingua, Latium, si non offenderet unum-
quemque poetarum limae labor, et mora. Vos, o
Pomplius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod
non 290
Multa dies et multa litura coercuit, atque
Praeseptum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

HINTS FROM HORACE

Reside in garrets, fly from those they
meet,
And walk in alleys, rather than the street.

With little rhyme, less reason, if you
please, 471
The name of poet may be got with ease,
So that not tuns of helleboric juice
Shall ever turn your head to any use;
Write but like Wordsworth, live beside a
Lake, 475
And keep your bushy locks a year from
Blake;
Then print your book, once more return
to town,
And boys shall hunt your bardship up and
down.

Am I not wise, if such some poets' plight,
To purge in spring—like Bayes—before
I write? 480
If this precaution soften'd not my bile,
I know no scribbler with a madder style;
But since (perhaps my feelings are too
nice)
I cannot purchase fame at such a price,
I'll labour gratis as a grinder's wheel,
And, blunt myself, give edge to others'
steel, 486
Nor write at all, unless to teach the art
To those rehearsing for the poet's part;
From Horace show the pleasing paths of
song,
And from my own example—what is
wrong. 490

Though modern practice sometimes
differs quite,
'Tis just as well to think before you write;
Let every book that suits your theme be
read,
So shall you trace it to the fountain-head.

He who has learn'd the duty which he
owes 495

Ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte 295
Credit, et excludit sanos Helicone poetas
Democritus; bona pars non unguis ponere
curat,
Non barbam; secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poetæ,
Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile nunquam
Tonsor Licino commiserit. O ego laevis, 301
Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam!
Non alius faceret meliora poemata: verum
Nil tanti est: ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi:
Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo;
Unde parentur opes; quid alat formetque
poetam;
Quid debeat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat
error. 308
Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons.
Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ:
Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur:
Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis;

To friends and country, and to pardon foes;
Who models his deportment as may best
Accord with brother, sire, or stranger guest;
Who takes our laws and worship as they are,
Nor roars reform for senate, church, and
bar; 500
In practice, rather than loud precept, wise,
Bids not his tongue, but heart, philoso-
phise:
Such is the man the poet should rehearse,
As joint exemplar of his life and verse.

Sometimes a sprightly wit, and tale well
told, 505
Without much grace, or weight, or art,
will hold
A longer empire o'er the public mind
Than sounding trifles, empty, though re-
fined.

Unhappy Greece! thy sons of ancient
days
The muse may celebrate with perfect
praise, 510
Whose generous children narrow'd not
their hearts
With commerce, given alone to arms and
arts.
Our boys (save those whom public schools
compel
To 'long and short' before they're taught
to spell) 514
From frugal fathers soon imbibe by rote,
'A penny saved, my lad, 's a penny got.'
Babe of a city birth! from sixpence take
The third, how much will the remainder
make?—
'A groat.'—'Ah, bravo! Dick hath done
the sum!
He'll swell my fifty thousand to a plum.'

They whose young souls receive this
rust betimes, 521
'Tis clear, are fit for anything but rhymes;

Quo sic amore parens, quo frater amandus, et
hospes;
Quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium; quæ
Partes in bellum missi ducis; ille profecto 315
Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.
Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque iubebo
Doctum imitatore, et vivas hinc ducere voces.
Interdum speciosa locis morataque recte
Fabula, nullius veneris, sine pondere et arte,
Valdius oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,
Quam versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.
Graii ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus assem 325
Discunt in partes centum diducere: dicat
Filius Albinus, Si de quincunce remota est
Uncia, quid superat? poteras dixisse—Triens. Eu!
Rem poteris servare tuam. Redit uncia: quid
fit? 329
Semis. An hæc animos aerugo et cura peculi
Cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina fingi

HINTS FROM HORACE

And Locke will tell you, that the father's
 right
 Who hides all verses from his children's
 sight; 524
 For poets (says this sage, and many more,)
 Make sad mechanics with their lyric lore;
 And Delphi now, however rich of old,
 Discovers little silver, and less gold,
 Because Parnassus, though a mount di-
 vine,
 Is poor as Irus, or an Irish mine. 530

Two objects always should the poet
 move,
 Or one or both,—to please or to improve.
 Whate'er you teach, be brief, if you design
 For our remembrance your didactic line;
 Redundance places memory on the rack,
 For brains may be o'erloaded, like the
 back. 536

Fiction does best when taught to look
 like truth,
 And fairy fables bubble none but youth:
 Expect no credit for too wondrous tales,
 Since Jonas only springs alive from
 whales! 540

Young men with aught but elegance
 dispense;
 Maturer years require a little sense.
 To end at once:—that bard for all is fit
 Who mingles well instruction with his wit;
 For him reviews shall smile, for him o'er-
 flow 545
 The patronage of Paternoster-row;
 His book, with Longman's liberal aid,
 shall pass
 (Who ne'er despises books that bring him
 brass);
 Through three long weeks the taste of
 London lead,
 And cross St. George's Channel and the
 Tweed. 550

Posse linenda cedro, et levi servanda cupresso?
 Aut prodese volunt, aut delectare poetas;
 Aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae. 334
 Quidquid præcipies, esto brevis: ut cito dicta
 Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
 Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.
 Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris:
 Nec, quodcumque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi:
 Neu pransae Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat
 alvo. 340
 Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis:
 Celsi prætereunt austera poemata Rhannæ.
 Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci:
 Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo. 344
 Hic meret aera liber Sosiis; hic et mare transit,
 Et longum noto scriptori prorogat ævum.
 Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus:
 Nam neque chorda sonum reddit quem vult
 manus et mens,
 Poscentique gravem persæpe remittit acutum;
 Nec semper feriet quodcumque minabitur arcus.

But everything has faults, nor is 't un-
 known
 That harps and fiddles often lose their tone,
 And wayward voices, at their owner's call,
 With all his best endeavours, only squall;
 Dogs blink their covey, flints withhold the
 spark, 555
 And double-barrels (damn them!) miss
 their mark.

Where frequent beauties strike the
 reader's view,
 We must not quarrel for a blot or two;
 But pardon equally to books or men,
 The slips of human nature, and the pen.

Yet if an author, spite of foe or friend,
 Despises all advice too much to mend,
 But ever twangs the same discordant string,
 Give him no quarter, howsoever he sing.
 Let Havard's fate o'ertake him, who, for
 once, 565
 Produced a play too dashing for a dunce:
 At first none deem'd it his; but when his
 name
 Announced the fact—what then?—it lost
 its fame.
 Though all deplore when Milton deigns to
 doze,
 In a long work 'tis fair to steal repose.

As pictures, so shall poems be; some
 stand 571
 The critic eye, and please when near at
 hand;
 But others at a distance strike the sight;
 This seeks the shade, but that demands
 the light,
 Nor dreads the connoisseur's fastidious
 view, 575
 But, ten times scrutinised, is ten times new.

Parnassian pilgrims! ye whom chance or
 choice
 Hath led to listen to the Muse's voice,

Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego
 paucis 351
 Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
 Aut humana parum cavit natura. Quid ergo est?
 Ut scriptor si peccat idem libarius usque,
 Quamvis est monitus, venia caret; ut citharoedus
 Ridetur, chorda qui semper oberrat eadem:
 Sic mihi, qui multum cessat, fit Choerilus ille,
 Quem bis terve bonum cum risu miror; et idem
 Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
 Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum.
 Ut pictura, poesis: erit quæ, si propius stes,
 Te capiat magis; et quædam, si longius abates:
 Hæc amat obscurum; volet hæc sub luce videri,
 Iudicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen:
 Hæc placuit semel; hæc decies repetita placebit.
 O maior juvenum, quamvis et voce paterna
 Fingeris ad rectum, et per te sapis, hoc tibi
 dictum 367
 Tolle memor: certis medium et tolerabile rebus
 Recte concedi: consultus iuris, et actor

HINTS FROM HORACE

Receive this counsel, and be timely wise;
Few reach the summit which before you
lies. 580

Our church and state, our courts and
camps, concede

Reward to very moderate heads indeed!
In these plain common sense will travel
far;

All are not Erskines who mislead the bar:
But poesy between the best and worst
No medium knows; you must be last or
first; 586

For middling poets' miserable volumes
Are damn'd alike by gods, and men, and
columns.

Again, my Jeffrey!—as that sound in-
spires, 589

How wakes my bosom to its wonted fires!
Fires, such as gentle Caledonians feel
When Southrons writhe upon their critic
wheel,

Or mild Eclectics, when some, worse than
Turks,

Would rob poor Faith to decorate 'good
works.'

Such are the genial feelings thou canst
claim— 595

My falcon flies not at ignoble game.
Mightiest of all Dunedin's beasts of chase!
For thee my Pegasus would mend his pace.
Arise, my Jeffrey! or my inkless pen 599
Shall never blunt its edge on meaner men;
Till thee or thine mine evil eye discerns,
Alas! 'I cannot strike at wretched kernes,'
Inhuman Saxon! wilt thou then resign
A muse and heart by choice so wholly
thine?

Dear d——d contemner of my schoolboy
songs, 605

Hast thou no vengeance for my man-
hood's wrongs?

If unprovoked thou once could bid me
bleed,

Hast thou no weapon for my daring deed?
What! not a word!—and am I then so low?

Wilt thou forbear, who never spared a
foe? 610

Hast thou no wrath, or wish to give it vent?
No wit for nobles, dunces by descent?

No jest on 'minors,' quibbles on a name,
Nor one facetious paragraph of blame?

Is it for this on Ilion I have stood, 615
And thought of Homer less than Holy-
rood!

On shore of Euxine or Aegean sea,
My hate, untravell'd, fondly turn'd to thee.

Ah! let me cease: in vain my bosom burns,
From Corydon unkind Alexis turns: 620

Thy rhymes are vain; thy Jeffrey then
forego,

Nor woo that anger which he will not
show.

What then?—Edina starves some lanker
son,

To write an article thou canst not shun;
Some less fastidious Scotchman shall be
found, 625

As bold in Billingsgate, though less re-
nown'd.

As if at table some discordant dish
Should shock our optics, such as frogs for
fish;

As oil in lieu of butter men decry, 629
And poppies please not in a modern pie;

If all such mixtures then be half a crime,
We must have excellence to relish rhyme.

Mere roast and boil'd no epicure invites;
Thus poetry disgusts, or else delights.

Who shoot not flying rarely touch a
gun: 635

Will he who swims not to the river run?
And men unpractised in exchanging
knocks

Must go to Jackson ere they dare to box.
Whate'er the weapon, cudgel, fist, or foil,

None reach expertness without years of
toil; 640

But fifty dunces can, with perfect ease,
Tag twenty thousand couplets, when they
please.

Why not?—shall I, thus qualified to sit
For rotten boroughs, never show my wit?

Shall I, whose fathers with the quorum
sate, 645

And lived in freedom on a fair estate;
Who left me heir, with stables, kennels,

packs,

To all their income, and to—twice its tax;
Whose form and pedigree have scarce a
fault,

Shall I, I say, suppress my Attic salt? 650

Causarum mediocris abest virtute disertis 370
Messalae, nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus:

Sed tamen in pretio est: mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non di, non concessere columnae.

Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,
Et crassum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle
papaver 375

Offendunt, poterat duci quia coena sine istis;
Sic animis natum inventumque poema iuvandis,
Si paulum a summo decessit, vergit ad imum.

Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet
armis,

Indoctusque pilae, discive, trochive, quiescit,
Ne spissae risum tollant impune coronae: 381

Qui nescit, versus tamen audet fingere!—Quid-
ni?

Liber et ingenuus praesertim census equestrem
Summam nummorum, vitiisque remotus ab
omni.

Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva: 385
Id tibi iudicium est, ea mens: si quid tamen olim
Scripseris, in Metii descendat iudicis aures,

Et patris, et nostras, nonumque prematur in
annum,

HINTS FROM HORACE

Thus think 'the mob of gentlemen;' but
 you, 651
 Besides all this, must have some genius
 too.
 Be this your sober judgment, and a rule,
 And print not piping hot from Southey's
 school,
 Who (ere another Thalaba appears) 655
 I trust will spare us for at least nine
 years.
 And hark 'ye, Southey! pray—but don't be
 vex'd—
 Burn all your last three works—and half
 the next.
 But why this vain advice? once published,
 books
 Can never be recall'd—from pastry-
 cooks! 660
 Though 'Madoc,' with 'Pucelle,' instead
 of punk,
 May travel back to Quito—on a trunk!

Orpheus, we learn from Ovid and Lem-
 priere,
 Led all wild beasts but women by the
 ear;
 And had he fiddled at the present hour,
 We'd seen the lions waltzing in the
 Tower; 666
 And old Amphion, such were minstrels
 then,
 Had built St. Paul's without the aid of
 Wren.
 Verse too was justice, and the bards of
 Greece
 Did more than constables to keep the
 peace; 670
 Abolish'd cuckoldom with much ap-
 plause,
 Call'd county meetings, and enforced the
 laws,
 Cut down crown influence with reforming
 scythes,
 And served the church—without demand-
 ing tithes;
 And hence, throughout all Hellas and the
 East, 675
 Each poet was a prophet and a priest,
 Whose old-establish'd board of joint con-
 trols
 Included kingdoms in the cure of souls.

Membranis intus positis: delere licebit 389
 Quod non edideris; nescit vox missa reverti.
 Sylvestres homines sacer interpretus deorum
 Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus:
 Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres, rabidosque leones:
 Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,
 Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blanda
 Ducere quo vellet: fuit hæc sapientia quondam,
 Publica privatis discernere, sacra profanis;
 Concubitu prohibere vago; dare iura maritis;
 Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno. 399
 Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
 Carminibus venit. Post hos insignia Homerus
 Tyrtæusque mares animos in Martia bella

Next rose the martial Homer, Epic's
 prince,
 And fighting's been in fashion ever since;
 And old Tyrtæus, when the Spartans
 warr'd, 681
 (A limping leader, but a lofty bard,)
 Though wall'd Ithome had resisted long,
 Reduced the fortress by the force of song.

When oracles prevail'd, in times of old,
 In song alone Apollo's will was told.
 Then if your verse is what all verse should
 be,
 And gods were not ashamed on't, why
 should we?

The Muse, like mortal females, may be
 woo'd; 689
 In turns she'll seem a Paphian, or a prude;
 Fierce as a bride when first she feels af-
 fright,
 Mild as the same upon the second night;
 Wild as the wife of alderman or peer,
 Now for his grace, and now a grenadier!
 Her eyes besem, her heart belies, her
 zone, 695
 Ice in a crowd, and lava when alone.

If verse be studied with some show of
 art,
 Kind Nature always will perform her part;
 Though without genius, and a native vein
 Of wit, we loathe an artificial strain, 700
 Yet art and nature join'd will win the prize,
 Unless they act like us and our allies.

The youth who trains to ride, or run a
 race,
 Must bear privations with unruffled face,
 Be call'd to labour when he thinks to
 dine, 705
 And, harder still, leave wenching and his
 wine.
 Ladies who sing, at least who sing at sight,
 Have follow'd music through her farthest
 flight;
 But rhymers tell you neither more nor less,
 'I've got a pretty poem for the press';
 And that's enough; then write and print as
 fast;— 711
 If Satan take the hindmost, who'd be last?

Versibus exacuit: dictæ per carmina sortes:
 Et vitæ monstrata via est: et gratia regum
 Pieris tentata modis: ludusque repertus, 405
 Et longorum operum finis: ne forte pudori
 Sit tibi Musa lyrae solers, et cantor Apollo.
 Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
 Quæsitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena,
 Nec rude quid possit video ingenium: alterius sic
 Altera poscit opem res, et coniura amice. 411
 Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
 Multa tulit fecitque puer: sudavit et aluit;
 Abstulit Venere et vino; qui Pythia cantat
 Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum.
 Nunc satis est dixisse: ego mira poemata pango:

HINTS FROM HORACE

They storm the types, they publish, one
and all,

They leap the counter, and they leave the
stall.

Provincial maidens, men of high com-
mand, 715

Yea, baronets have ink'd the bloody hand!
Cash cannot quell them; Pollio play'd this
prank,

(Then Phœbus first found credit in a bank!)
Not all the living only, but the dead,

Fool on, as fluent as an Orpheus' head;
Damn'd all their days, they posthumously
thrive, 721

Dug up from dust, though buried when
alive!

Reviews record this epidemic crime,
Those Books of Martyrs to the rage for
rhyme, 724

Alas! woe worth the scribbler! often seen
In Morning Post or Monthly Magazine.

There lurk his earlier lays; but soon, hot
press'd,

Behold a quarto!—Tarts must tell the rest.
Then leave, ye wise, the lyre's precarious
chords 729

To muse-mad baronets, or madder lords,
Or country Crispins, now grown some-
what stale,

Twin Doric minstrels, drunk with Doric
ale!

Hark to those notes, narcotically soft!
The cobbler-laureats sing to Capel Lofft!

Till, lo! that modern Midas, as he hears,
Adds an ell growth to his egregious ears!

There lives one druid, who prepares in
time 737

'Gainst future feuds his poor revenge of
rhyme;

Racks his dull memory, and his duller
muse,

To publish faults which friendship should
excuse. 740

If friendship's nothing, self-regard might
teach

More polish'd usage of his parts of speech.
But what is shame, or what is aught to
him?

He vents his spleen, or gratifies his whim.
Some fancied slight has roused his lurk-
ing hate, 745

Some folly cross'd, some jest, or some
debate;

Up to his den Sir Scribbler hies, and soon
The gather'd gall is voided in lampoon.

Occupet extremum scabies; mihi turpe relinqui
est, 407

Et, quod non didici, sane nescire fateri.
— Si carmina condas, 436

Nunquam te fallant animi sub vulpe latentés.
Quintilio si quid recitares, Corrige, sodes,

Hoc (aiebat) et hoc: melius te posse negares,
Bis terque expertum frustra, delere iubebat,

Perhaps at some pert speech you've dared
to frown,

Perhaps your poem may have pleased the
town: 750

If so, alas! 'tis nature in the man—
May Heaven forgive you, for he never can!

Then be it so; and may his withering bays
Bloom fresh in satire, though they fade in
praise!

While his lost songs no more shall steep
and stink, 755

The dullest, fattest weeds on Lethe's brink,
But springing upwards from the sluggish
mould,

Be (what they never were before) be—sold!
Should some rich bard (but such a mon-
ster now, 759

In modern physics, we can scarce allow),
Should some pretending scribbler of the
court,

Some rhyming peer—there's plenty of the
sort—

All but one poor dependent priest with-
drawn,

(Ah! too regardless of his chaplain's
yawn!) 764

Condemn the unlucky curate to recite
Their last dramatic work by candle-light,

How would the preacher turn each rueful
leaf,

Dull as his sermons, but not half so brief!
Yet, since 'tis promised at the rector's
death,

He'll risk no living for a little breath.
Then spouts and foams, and cries at every
line, 771

(The Lord forgive him!) 'Bravo! grand!
divine!'

Hoarse with those praises (which, by
flatt'ry fed,

Dependence barters for her bitter bread),
He strides and stamps along with creaking
boot; 775

Till the floor echoes his emphatic foot,
Then sits again, then rolls his pious eye,

As when the dying vicar will not die!
Nor feels, forsooth, emotion at his
heart;— 779

But all dissemblers overact their part.

Ye, who aspire to 'build the lofty rhyme,'
Believe not all who laud your false 'sub-
lime;'

But if some friend shall hear your work,
and say,

'Expunge that stanza, lop that line away,'

Et male tornatos incudi reddere versus. 441

Si defendere delictum quam vertere malle,
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam insumebat
inanem,

Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.
Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendit
inertes; 445

Culpabit duos; incomptis allinet atrum
Transverso calamo signum; ambitiosa recidet

HINTS FROM HORACE

And, after fruitless efforts, you return
Without amendment, and he answers,
 'Burn!' 786
That instant throw your paper in the fire,
Ask not his thoughts, or follow his desire;
But if (true bard!) you scorn to con-
 descend,
And will not alter what you can't defend,
If you will breed this bastard of your
 brains, 791
We'll have no words—I've only lost my
 pains.

Yet, if you only prize your favourite
 thought,
As critics kindly do, and authors ought;
If your cool friend annoy you now and
 then, 795
And cross whole pages with his plaguy
 pen;
No matter, throw your ornaments aside,—
Better let him than all the world deride.
Give light to passages too much in shade,
Nor let a doubt obscure one verse you've
 made; 800
Your friend's a 'Johnson,' not to leave
 one word,
However trifling, which may seem absurd;
Such erring trifles lead to serious ills,
And furnish food for critics, or their quills.

As the Scotch fiddle, with its touching
 tune, 805
Or the sad influence of the angry moon,
All men avoid bad writers' ready tongues,
As yawning waiters fly Fitzscribble's
 lungs;
Yet on he mouths—ten minutes—tedious
 each 809
As prelate's homily, or placeman's speech;
Long as the last years of a lingering lease,
When riot pauses until rents increase.
While such a minstrel, muttering fustian,
 strays
O'er hedge and ditch, through unfre-
 quented ways,

Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambigue dictum; mutanda notabit;
Fiet Aristarchus: nec dicet, Cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis? hae nugae seria ducent
In mala derisum semel exceptumque sinistre.
Ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius
 urget,
Aut fanaticus error et iracunda Diana, 454
Vesanus tetigisse timent fugiuntque poetam,
Qui sapiunt; agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.
Hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur, et errat,
Si veluti merulis intentus decedit auceps
In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum
Clamet, Io cives! non sit qui tollere curet. 460
Si quis curet opem ferre, et demittere funem,
Qui scis an prudens huc se deiecerit, atque

If by some chance he walks into a well,
And shouts for succour with stentorian
 yell, 816
'A rope! help, Christians, as ye hope for
 grace!'
Nor woman, man, nor child will stir a
 pace;
For there his carcass he might freely fling,
From frenzy, or the humour of the thing.
Though this has happen'd to more bards
 than one; 821
I'll tell you Budgell's story,—and have
 done.

Budgell, a rogue and rhymester, for no
 good,
(Unless his case be much misunderstood,) 825
When teased with creditors' continual
 claims,
'To die like Cato,' leapt into the Thames!
And therefore be it lawful through the
 town
For any bard to poison, hang, or drown.
Who saves the intended suicide receives
Small thanks from him who loathes the
 life he leaves; 830
And, sooth to say, mad poets must not
 lose
The glory of that death they freely choose.

Nor is it certain that some sorts of verse
Prick not the poet's conscience as a curse;
Dosed with vile drams on Sunday he was
 found, 835
Or got a child on consecrated ground!
And hence is haunted with a rhyming
 rage—
Fear'd like a bear just bursting from his
 cage.
If free, all fly his versifying fit,
Fatal at once to simpleton or wit: 840
But *him*, unhappy! whom he seizes,—*him*
He flays with recitation limb by limb;
Probes to the quick where'er he makes his
 breach,
And gorges like a lawyer—or a leech.

Servari nolit? dicam: Siculique poetæ
Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aet-
 nam 465
Insiluit. Sit ius liceatque perire poetis:
Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.
Nec semel hoc fecit; nec, si retractus erit,
 iam
Fiet homo, et ponet famosæ mortis amorem.
Nec satis apparet cur versus facit; utrum
Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental
Moverit incestus: certe furit, ac velut ursus,
Obiectos caveae valuit si frangere clathros, 473
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo.
Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA

—'Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat, et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
Aeneid, lib. vii.

ATHENS: CAPUCHIN CONVENT,
March 17, 1811.

SLOW sinks, more lovely ere his race be
run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely
bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light;
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he
throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it
glows;
On old Aegina's rock and Hydra's isle
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering loves to
shine,
Though there his altars are no more di-
vine.
Descending fast, the mountain-shadows
kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long ex-
panse,
More deeply purpled, meet his mellowing
glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits
driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of
heaven;
Till, darkly shaded from the land and
deep,
Behind his Delphian rock he sinks to
sleep.

On such an eve his palest beam he cast
When, Athens! here thy wisest look'd his
last,
How watch'd thy better sons his farewell
ray,
That clos'd their murder'd sage's latest
day!
Not yet—not yet—Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful
dyes;
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to
pour,
The land where Phoebus never frown'd
before;
But ere he sunk below Cithaeron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd—the spirit
fled;
The soul of him that scorn'd to fear or fly,
Who lived and died as none can live or die.

But, lo! from high Hymettus to the plain
The queen of night asserts her silent reign;
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, or girds her glowing
form,
With cornice glimmering as the moon-
beams play,
There the white column greets her grateful
ray,
And bright around, with quivering beams
beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive scatter'd dark and
wide,
Where meek Cephissus sheds his scanty
tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mos-
que,
The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And sad and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane, yon solitary palm; 46
All, tinged with varied hues, arrest the eye;
And dull were his that pass'd them heed-
less by.

Again the Aegean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental
war:
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long expanse of sapphire and of
gold,
Mix'd with the shades of many a distant isle
That frown, where gentler ocean deigns to
smile.

As thus, within the walls of Pallas' fane,
I mark'd the beauties of the land and main,
Alone, and friendless, on the magic shore,
Whose arts and arms but live in poets' lore;
Oft as the matchless dome I turn'd to scan,
Sacred to gods, but not secure from man,
The past return'd, the present seem'd to
cease,
And Glory knew no clime beyond her
Greece!

Hours roll'd along, and Dian's orb on
high
Had gain'd the centre of her softest sky;
And yet unwearied still my footsteps trod
O'er the vain shrine of many a vanish'd
god:
But chiefly, Pallas! thine, when Hecate's
glare,
Check'd by thy columns, fell more sadly fair

THE CURSE OF MINERVA

O'er the chill marble, where the startling
tread
Thrills the lone heart like echoes from the
dead.
Long had I mused, and treasured every
trace
The wreck of Greece recorded of her race,
When, lo! a giant form before me strode,
And Pallas hail'd me in her own abode!

Yes, 'twas Minerva's self; but, ah! how
changed,
Since o'er the Dardan field in arms she
ranged!
Not such as erst, by her divine command,
Her form appear'd from Phidias' plastic
hand:
Gone were the terrors of her awful brow,
Her idle aegis bore no Gorgon now;
Her helm was dinted, and the broken lance
Seem'd weak and shaftless e'en to mortal
glance;
The olive branch, which still she deign'd to
clasp,
Shrunk from her touch, and wither'd in her
grasp;
And, ah! though still the brightest of the
sky,
Celestial tears bedimm'd her large blue
eye:
Round the rent casque her owlet circled
slow,
And mourn'd his mistress with a shriek of
woe!

'Mortal!'—'twas thus she spake—'that
blush of shame
Proclaims thee Briton, once a noble name;
First of the mighty, foremost of the free,
Now honour'd *less* by all, and *least* by me:
Chief of thy foes shall Pallas still be found.
Seek'st thou the cause of loathing?—look
around.
Lo! here, despite of war and wasting fire,
I saw successive tyrannies expire.
'Scaped from the ravage of the Turk and
Goth,
Thy country sends a spoiler worse than
both.
Survey this vacant, violated fane;
Recount the relics torn that yet remain:
These Cecrops placed, *this* Pericles
adorn'd,
That Adrian rear'd when drooping Sci-
ence mourn'd.
What more I owe let gratitude attest—
Know, Alaric and Elgin did the rest.
That all may learn from whence the
plunderer came,
The insulted wall sustains his hated name:
For Elgin's fame thus grateful Pallas
pleads,
Below, his name—above, behold his
deeds!

Be ever hail'd with equal honour here
The Gothic monarch and the Pictish peer:
Arms gave the first his right, the last had
none,
But basely stole what less barbarians won.
So when the lion quits his fell repast,
Next prowls the wolf, the filthy jackal last:
Flesh, limbs, and blood the former make
their own,
The last poor brute securely gnaws the
bone.
Yet still the gods are just, and crimes are
cross'd:
See here what Elgin won, and what he lost!
Another name with *his* pollutes my shrine:
Behold where Dian's beams disdain to
shine!
Some retribution still might Pallas claim,
When Venus half avenged Minerva's
shame.'

She ceased awhile, and thus I dared
reply,
To soothe the vengeance kindling in her
eye:
'Daughter of Jove! in Britain's injured
name,
A true-born Briton may the deed disclaim.
Frown not on England; England owns
him not:
Athena, no! thy plunderer was a Scot.
Ask'st thou the difference? From fair
Phyle's towers
Survey Bœotia;—Caledonia's ours.
And well I know within that bastard land
Hath Wisdom's goddess never held com-
mand;
A barren soil, where Nature's germs, con-
fined
To stern sterility, can stint the mind;
Whose thistle well betrays the niggard
earth,
Emblem of all to whom the land gives
birth;
Each genial influence nurtured to resist;
A land of meanness, sophistry, and mist.
Each breeze from foggy mount and
marshy plain
Dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain,
Till, burst at length, each wat'ry head o'er-
flows,
Foul as their soil, and frigid as their
snows.
Then thousand schemes of petulance and
pride
Despatch her scheming children far and
wide:
Some east, some west, some everywhere
but north,
In quest of lawless gain, they issue forth.
And thus—accursed be the day and year!
She sent a Pict to slay the felon here.
Yet Caledonia claim some native worth,
As dull Bœotia gave a Pindar birth;

THE CURSE OF MINERVA

So may her few, the letter'd and the brave,
Bound to no clime, and victors of the grave,
Shake off the sordid dust of such a land,
And shine like children of a happier
strand;

As once, of yore, in some obnoxious
place,
Ten names (if found) had saved a wretched
race.'

'Mortal!' the blue-eyed maid resumed,
'once more
Bear back my mandate to thy native shore.
Though fallen, alas! this vengeance yet is
mine,
To turn my counsels far from lands like
thine. 160
Hear then in silence Pallas' stern behest;

'First on the head of him who did this
deed
My curse shall light,—on him and all his
seed: 164

Without one spark of intellectual fire,
Be all the sons as senseless as the sire:
If one with wit the parent brood disgrace,
Believe him bastard of a brighter race:
Still with his hireling artists let him prate,
And Folly's praise repay for Wisdom's
hate; 170
Long of their patron's gusto let them tell,
Whose noblest, *native* gusto is—to sell:
To sell, and make—may shame record the
day!—

The state receiver of his pilfer'd prey.
Meantime, the flattering, feeble dotard,
West, 175

Europe's worst dauber, and poor Britain's
best,
With palsied hand shall turn each model
o'er,

And own himself an infant of fourscore.
Be all the bruisers cull'd from all St. Giles',
That art and nature may compare their
styles; 180

While brawny brutes in stupid wonder
stare,
And marvel at his lordship's "stone shop"
there.

Round the throng'd gate shall sauntering
coxcombs creep,
To lounge and lucubrate, to prate and

many a languid maid, with longing
sigh, 185

On giant statues casts the curious eye;
The room with transient glance appears to
skim

Yet marks the mighty back and length of
Humb;

Mourns o'er the difference of *now* and *then*;
Exclaims, "These Greeks indeed were
proper men!" 190

Draws slight comparisons of *these* with
those,
And envies Laïs all her Attic beaux.
When shall a modern maid have swains
like these!

Alas! Sir Harry is no Hercules! 194
And last of all, amidst the gaping crew,
Some calm spectator, as he takes his view,
In silent indignation mix'd with grief,
Admires the plunder, but abhors the thief.
Oh, loath'd in life, nor pardon'd in the
dust,

May hate pursue his sacrilegious lust!
Link'd with the fool that fired the Ephe-
sian dome, 201
Shall vengeance follow far beyond the
tomb,
And Eratostratus and Elgin shine
In many a branding page and burning line;
Alike reserved for aye to stand accursed,
Perchance the second blacker than the
first. 206

'So let him stand, through ages yet un-
born,
Fix'd statue on the pedestal of Scorn;
Though not for him alone revenge shall
wait,

But fits thy country for her coming fate:
Hers were the deeds that taught her law-
less son 211
To do what oft Britannia's self had done.
Look to the Baltic—blazing from afar,
Your old ally yet mourns perfidious war.
Not to such deeds did Pallas lend her aid,
Or break the compact which herself had
made; 216

Far from such councils, from the faithless
field
She fled—but left behind her Gorgon
shield;

A fatal gift that turn'd your friends to
stone,
And left lost Albion hated and alone.

'Look to the East, where Ganges'
swarthy race 221
Shall shake your tyrant empire to its base;
Lo! there Rebellion rears her ghastly head,
And glares the Nemesis of native dead;
Till Indus rolls a deep purpureal flood
And claims his long arrears of northern
blood. 226

So may ye perish! Pallas, when she gave
Your free-born rights, forbade ye to en-
slave.

'Look on your Spain!—she clasps the
hand she hates,
But boldly clasps, and thrusts you from
her gates. 230

Bear witness, bright Barossa! thou canst tell
Whose were the sons that bravely fought
and fell.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA

But Lusitania, kind and dear ally, 233
Can spare a few to fight, and sometimes fly.
Oh glorious field! by Famine fiercely won,
The Gaul retires for once, and all is done!
But when did Pallas teach, that one re-
treat
Retrieved three long olympiads of defeat?

'Look last at home—ye love not to look
there; 239
On the grim smile of comfortless despair:
Your city saddens: loud though Revel
howls,
Here Famine faints, and yonder Rapine
prowls.
See all alike of more or less bereft;
No misers tremble when there's nothing
left.
"Blest paper credit;" who shall dare to
sing? 245
It clogs like lead Corruption's weary wing.
Yet Pallas pluck'd each premier by the ear,
Who gods and men alike disdain'd to hear;
But one, repentant o'er a bankrupt state,
On Pallas calls,—but calls, alas! too late:
Then raves for * * : to that Mentor bends,
Though he and Pallas never yet were
friends. 252
Him senates hear, whom never yet they
heard,
Contemptuous once, and now no less ab-
surd.
So, once of yore, each reasonable frog
Swore faith and fealty to his sovereign
"log". 256
Thus hail'd your rulers their patrician
clod,
As Egypt chose an onion for a god.

'Now fare ye well! enjoy your little hour;
Go, grasp the shadow of your vanish'd
power; 260
Gloss o'er the failure of each fondest
scheme;
Your strength a name, your bloated wealth
a dream.
Gone is that gold, the marvel of mankind,
And pirates barter all that 's left behind.
No more the hirelings, purchased near and
far, 265
Crowd to the ranks of mercenary war.
The idle merchant on the useless quay
Droops o'er the bales no bark may bear
away;
Or, back returning, sees rejected stores
Rot piecemeal on his own encumber'd
shores: 270
The starved mechanic breaks his rusting
loom,
And desperate mans him 'gainst the com-
ing doom.
Then in the senate of your sinking state
Show me the man whose counsels may
have weight.

Vain is each voice where tones could once
command; 275
E'en factions cease to charm a factious
land:
Yet jarring sects convulse a sister isle,
And light with maddening hands the mu-
tual pile.

'Tis done, 'tis past, since Pallas warns
in vain;
The Furies seize her abdicated reign:
Wide o'er the realm they wave their kind-
ling brands, 281
And wring her vitals with their fiery hands.
But one convulsive struggle still re-
mains,
And Gaul shall weep ere Albion wear her
chains.
The banner'd pomp of war, the glittering
files, 285
O'er whose gay trappings stern Bellona
smiles;
The brazen trump, the spirit-stirring drum,
That bid the foe defiance ere they come;
The hero bounding at his country's call,
The glorious death that consecrates his
fall, 290
Swell the young heart with visionary
charms,
And bid it antedate the joys of arms.
But know, a lesson you may yet be taught,
With death alone are laurels cheaply
bought:
Not in the conflict Havoc seeks delight,
His day of mercy is the day of fight. 296
But when the field is fought, the battle
won,
Though drench'd with gore, his woes are
but begun:
His deeper deeds as yet ye know by name:
The slaughter'd peasant and the ravish'd
dame, 300
The rifled mansion and the foe-reap'd
field,
Ill suit with souls at home, untaught to
yield.
Say with what eye along the distant down
Would flying burghers mark the blazing
town?
How view the column of ascending flames
Shake his red shadow o'er the startled
Thames? 306
Nay, frown not, Albion! for the torch was
thine
That lit such pyres from Tagus to the
Rhine:
Now should they burst on thy devoted
coast,
Go, ask thy bosom who deserves them
most. 310
The law of heaven and earth is life for
life,
And she who raised, in vain regrets, the
strife.'

THE WALTZ

AN APOSTROPHIC HYMN

'Qualis in Eurotae ripls, aut per iuga Cynthia,
Exercent Diana choros.'—VIRGIL.

'Such on Eurota's banks, or Cynthia's height,
Diana seems: and so she charms the sight,
When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
The quire of nymphs, and overtops their heads.'
DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

TO THE PUBLISHER

SIR,
I AM a country gentleman of a midland county. I might have been a parliament man for a certain borough; having had the offer of as many votes as General T. at the general election in 1812*. But I was all for domestic happiness; as, fifteen years ago, on a visit to London, I married a middle-aged maid of honour. We lived happily at Hornem Hall till last season, when my wife and I were invited by the Countess of Waltzaway (a distant relation of my spouse) to pass the winter in town. Thinking no harm, and our girls being come to a marriageable (or, as they call it, *marketable*) age, and having besides a Chancery suit invertebrately entailed upon the family estate, we came up in our old chariot,—of which, by the by, my wife grew so much ashamed in less than a week, that I was obliged to buy a second-hand barouche, of which I might mount the box, Mrs. H. says, if I could drive, but never see the inside—that place being reserved for the Honourable Augustus Tiptoe, her partner-general and opera-knight. Hearing great praises of Mrs. H.'s dancing (she was famous for birthright minuets in the latter end of the last century), I unbooted, and went to a ball at the Countess's, expecting to see a country dance, or at most, cotillions, reels, and all the old paces to the newest tunes. But, judge of my surprise, on arriving, to see poor dear Mrs. Hornem with her arms half round the loins of a huge hussar-looking gentleman I never set eyes on before; and his, to say truth, rather more than half round her waist, turning round and round to a d—d see-saw up-and-down sort of tune, that reminded me of the 'Black Joke,' only more '*affettuoso*,' till it made me quite giddy with wondering they were not so. By-and-by they stopped a bit, and I thought they would sit or fall down:—but no; with Mrs. H.'s hand on his shoulder, '*quam familiariter*,' (as Terence said, when I was at school,) they walked about a minute, and then at it again, like two cock-chafers spitted on the same bodkin. I asked what all this meant, when, with a loud laugh, a child no older than our Wilhelmina (a name I never heard but in the Vicar of Wakefield, though her mother would call her after the Princess of Swappenbach,) said, 'Lord! Mr. Hornem, can't you see they're waltzing?' or waltzing (I forget which); and then up she got, and her mother and sister, and away they went, and round-abouted it till supper-time. Now that I know what it is, I like it of all things, and so does Mrs. H. (though I have broken my shins, and four times overturned Mrs. Hornem's maid, in practising the preliminary steps in a morning). Indeed, so much do I like it, that having a turn for rhyme, tastily displayed in some election ballads, and songs in honour of all the victories (but till lately I have had little practice in that way), I sat down, and with the aid of William Fitzgerald, Esq., and a few hints from Dr. Busby, (whose recitations I attend, and am monstrous fond of Master Busby's manner of delivering his father's late successful 'Drury Lane Address,') I composed the following hymn, wherewithal to make my sentiments known to the public; whom, nevertheless, I heartily despise, as well as the critics.

I am, Sir, yours, &c. &c.,
HORACE HORNEM.

MUSE of the many-twinkling feet! whose charms	Thy legs must move to conquer as they fly, If but thy coats are reasonably high; 10
Are now extended up from legs to arms;	Thy breast—if bare enough—requires no shield;
Terpsichore!—too long misdeem'd a maid—	Dance forth— <i>sans armour</i> thou shalt take the field,
Reproachful term—bestow'd but to up- braid—	And own—impregnable to <i>most</i> assaults, Thy not too lawfully begotten 'Waltz.'
Henceforth in all the bronze of brightness shine,	Hail, nimble nymph! to whom the young hussar, 15
The least a vestal of the virgin Nine.	The whisker'd votary of waltz and war,
Far be from thee and thine the name of prude:	His night devotes, despite of spur and boots;
Mock'd, yet triumphant; sneer'd at, un- subdued;	A sight unmatch'd since Orpheus and his brutes:

* State of the poll (last day) 5.

† My Latin is all forgotten, if a man can be said to have forgotten what he never remembered; but I bought my title-page motto of a Catholic priest for a three-shilling bank token, after much haggling for the even shilling. I grudged the money to a Papist, being all for the memory of Perceval and 'No Popery,' and quite regretting the downfall of the pope, because we can't burn him any more.

THE WALTZ

Hail, spirit-stirring Waltz!—beneath whose
banners
A modern hero fought for modish man-
ners;
On Hounslow's heath to rival Wellesley's
fame,
Cock'd, fired, and miss'd his man—but
gain'd his aim;
Hail, moving muse! to whom the fair one's
breast
Gives all it can, and bids us take the rest.
Oh! for the flow of Busby, or of Fitz, 25
The latter's loyalty, the former's wits,
To 'energise the object I pursue,'
And give both Belial and his dance their
due!

Imperial Waltz! imported from the
Rhine
(Famed for the growth of pedigrees and
wine),
Long be thine import from all duty free, 30
And hock itself be less esteem'd than thee;
In some few qualities alike—for hock
Improves our cellar—*thou* our living
stock.
The head to hock belongs—thy subtler
art 35
Intoxicates alone the heedless heart:
Through the full veins thy gentler poison
swims,
And wakes to wantonness the willing
limbs.

Oh, Germany! how much to thee we
owe,
As heaven-born Pitt can testify below,
Ere cursed confederation made thee
France's, 41
And only left us thy d—d debts and
dances!
Of subsidies and Hanover bereft,
We bless thee still—for George the Third
is left!
Of kings the best—and last, not least in
worth, 45
For graciously begetting George the
Fourth.
To Germany, and highnesses serene,
Who owe us millions—don't we owe the
queen?
To Germany, what owe we not besides?
So oft bestowing Brunswickers and
brides;
Who paid for vulgar, with her royal blood,
Drawn from the stem of each Teutonic
stud: 52
Who sent us—so be pardon'd all her
faults—
A dozen dukes, some kings, a queen—and
Waltz.

But peace to her—her emperor and diet,
Though now transferr'd to Buonaparte's
'fiat!' 56

Back to my theme—O Muse of motion!
say,
How first to Albion found thy Waltz her
way!

Borne on the breath of hyperborean
gales,
From Hamburg's port (while Hamburg
yet had *mails*), 60
Ere yet unlucky Fame—compell'd to creep
To snowy Gottenburg—was chill'd to
sleep;
Or, starting from her slumbers, deign'd
arise,
Heligoland! to stock thy mart with lies;
While unburnt Moscow yet had news to
send, 65
Nor owed her fiery exit to a friend,
She came—Waltz came—and with her
certain sets
Of true despatches, and as true gazettes:
Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest des-
patch,
Which 'Moniteur' nor 'Morning Post'
can match; 70
And—almost crush'd beneath the glorious
news—
Ten plays, and forty tales of Kotzebue's;
One envoy's letters, six composers' airs,
And loads from Frankfort and from
Leipsic fairs; 74
Meiner's four volumes upon womankind,
Like Lapland witches to insure a wind;
Brunck's heaviest tome for ballast, and,
to back it,
Of Heyné, such as should not sink the
packet.

Fraught with this cargo—and her fair-
est freight, 79
Delightful Waltz, on tiptoe for a mate,
The welcome vessel reach'd the genial
strand,
And round her flock'd the daughters of the
land.
Not decent David, when, before the ark,
His grand pas-seul excited some remark;
Not love-lorn Quixote, when his Sancho
thought 85
The knight's fandango friskier than it
ought;
Not soft Herodias, when, with winning
tread,
Her nimble feet danced off another's
head;
Not Cleopatra on her galley's deck,
Display'd so much of *leg*, or more of
neck, 90
Than thou, ambrosial Waltz, when first
the moon
Beheld thee twirling to a Saxon tune!

To you, ye husbands of ten years! whose
brows
Ache with the annual tributes of a spouse;

THE WALTZ

To you of nine years less, who only bear
The budding sprouts of those that you
shall wear, ⁹⁶

With added ornaments around them roll'd
Of native brass, or law-awarded gold;
To you, ye matrons, ever on the watch
To mar a son's, or make a daughter's
match; ¹⁰⁰

To you, ye children of—whom chance
accords—

Always the ladies, and sometimes their
lords;

To you, ye single gentlemen, who seek
Torments for life, or pleasures for a week;
As Love or Hymen your endeavours
guide, ¹⁰⁵

To gain your own, or snatch another's
bride:—

To one and all the lovely stranger came,
And every ball-room echoes with her
name.

Endearing Waltz!—to thy more melting
tune

Bow Irish jig and ancient rigadoon. ¹¹⁰
Scotch reels, avaunt! and country-dance,
forego

Your future claims to each fantastic toe!
Waltz—Waltz alone—both legs and arms
demands, ¹¹⁵

Liberal of feet, and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public
sight

Where ne'er before—but—pray 'put out
the light.'

Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far—or I am much too
near;

And true, though strange—Waltz whis-
pers this remark, ¹¹⁹

'My slippery steps are safest in the dark!'
But here the Muse with due decorum halts,
And lends her longest petticoat to Waltz.

Observant travellers of every time! ¹²³
Ye quartos publish'd upon every clime!

O say, shall dull Romaika's heavy round,
Fandango's wriggles, or Bolero's bound;
Can Egypt's Almas—tantalising group—
Columbia's caperers to the warlike
whoop—

Can aught from cold Kamschatka to Cape
Horn

With Waltz compare, or after Waltz be
borne? ¹³⁰

Ah, no! from Morier's pages down to
Galt's,

Each tourist pens a paragraph for 'Waltz.'

Shades of those belles whose reign be-
gan of yore,

With George the Third's—and ended long
before!—

Though in your daughters' daughters yet
you thrive, ¹³⁵

Burst from your lead, and be yourselves
alive!

Back to the ball-room speed your spectred
host,

Fool's Paradise is dull to that you lost.
No treacherous powder bids conjecture
quake;

No stiff-starched stays make meddling
fingers ache; ¹⁴⁰

(Transferr'd to those ambiguous things
that ape

Goats in their visage, women in their
shape;)

No damsel faints when rather closely
press'd,

But more caressing seems when most ca-
ress'd;

Superfluous hartshorn, and reviving salt,
Both banish'd by the sovereign cordial
'Waltz.' ¹⁴⁶

Seductive Waltz!—though on thy native
shore

Even Werter's self proclaim'd thee half a
whore;

Werter—to decent vice though much in-
clined,

Yet warm, not wanton; dazzled, but not
blind— ¹⁵⁰

Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with
Staël,

Would even proscribe thee from a Paris
ball;

The fashion hails—from countesses to
queens,

And maids and valets waltz behind the
scenes;

Wide and more wide thy witching circle
spreads, ¹⁵⁵

And turns—if nothing else—at least our
heads;

With thee even clumsy cits attempt to
bounce,

And cockneys practise what they can't
pronounce.

Gods! how the glorious theme my strain
exalts,

And rhyme finds partner rhyme in praise
of 'Waltz!' ¹⁶⁰

Blest was the time Waltz chose for her
début;

The court, the Regent, like herself were
new;

New face for friends, for foes some new
rewards;

New ornaments for black and royal
guards;

New laws to hang the rogues that roar'd
for bread; ¹⁶⁵

New coins (most new) to follow those that
fled;

New victories—nor can we prize them less,
Though Jenky wonders at his own success;

New wars, because the old succeed so well,

THE WALTZ

That most survivors envy those who fell;
New mistresses—no, old—and yet 'tis
true, 171

Though they be *old*, the *thing* is something
new;

Each new, quite new—(except some
ancient tricks),

New white-sticks, gold-sticks, broom-
sticks, all new sticks!

With vests or ribands—deck'd alike in hue,
New troopers strut, new turncoats blush
in blue:

So saith the muse: my ———, what say you?
Such was the time when Waltz might best
maintain

Her new preferences in this novel reign;
Such was the time, nor ever yet was such;
Hoops are *no more*, and petticoats *not*
much; 181

Morals and minuets, virtue and her stays,
And tell-tale powder—all have had their
days.

The ball begins—the honours of the house
First duly done by daughter or by spouse,
Some potentate—or royal or serene—
With Kent's gay grace, or sapient Glos-
ter's mien,

Leads forth the ready dame, whose rising
flush

Might once have been mistaken for a blush.
From where the garb just leaves the
bosom free, 190

That spot where hearts were once sup-
posed to be;

Round all the confines of the yielded waist,
The strangest hand may wander undis-
placed;

The lady's in return may grasp as much
As princely paunches offer to her touch.
Pleased round the chalky floor how well
they trip, 196

One hand reposing on the royal hip;
The other to the shoulder no less royal
Ascending with affection truly loyal!

Thus front to front the partners move or
stand, 200

The foot may rest, but none withdraw the
hand;

And all in turn may follow in their rank,
The Earl of—Asterisk—and Lady—
Blank;

Sir—Such-a-one—with those of fashion's
host,

For whose blest surnames—vide 'Morn-
ing Post.' 205

(Or if for that impartial print too late,
Search Doctors' Commons six months
from my date)—

Thus all and each, in movement swift or
slow,

The genial contact gently undergo;
Till some might marvel, with the modest
Turk, 210

If 'nothing follows all this palming work?'

True, honest Mirza!—you may trust my
rhyme—

Something does follow at a fitter time;
The breast thus publicly resign'd to man,
In private may resist him—if it can. 215

O ye who loved our grandmothers of
yore,

Fitzpatrick, Sheridan, and many more!
And thou, my prince! whose sovereign
taste and will

It is to love the lovely beldames still!
Thou ghost of Queensberry! whose judg-
ing sprite 220

Satan may spare to peep a single night,
Pronounce—if ever in your days of bliss
Asmodeus struck so bright a stroke as this;

To teach the young ideas how to rise,
Flush in the cheek, and languish in the
eyes; 225

Rush to the heart, and lighten through
the frame,

With half-told wish, and ill-dissembled
flame,

For prurient nature still will storm the
breast—

Who, tempted thus, can answer for the
rest? 229

But ye—who never felt a single thought
For what our morals are to be, or ought;

Who wisely wish the charms you view to
reap,

Say—would you make those beauties
quite so cheap?

Hot from the hands promiscuously ap-
plied,

Round the slight waist, or down the glow-
ing side, 235

Where were the rapture then to clasp the
form

From this lewd grasp and lawless contact
warm?

At once love's most endearing thought
resign,

To press the hand so press'd by none but
thine; 239

To gaze upon that eye which never met
Another's ardent look without regret;

Approach the lip which all, without re-
straint,

Come near enough—if not to touch—to
taint;

If such thou lovest—love her then no
more,

Or give—like her—caresses to a score;
Her mind with these is gone, and with it
go 246

The little left behind it to bestow.

Voluptuous Waltz! and dare I thus
blaspheme?

Thy bard forgot thy praises were his
theme.

THE WALTZ

Terpsichore, forgive!—at every ball 250
 My wife now waltzes—and my daughters
 shall;
 My son—(or stop—'tis needless to in-
 quire—
 These little accidents should ne'er tran-
 spire;
 Some ages hence our genealogic-tree
 Will wear as green a bough for him as
 me)— 255
 Waltzing shall rear, to make our name
 amends,
 Grandsons for me—in heirs to all his
 friends.

THE BLUES

A LITERARY ECLOGUE

'Nimium ne crede colori.'—VIRGIL.

O trust not, ye beautiful creatures, to hue,
 Though your hair were as red as your stockings are blue.

ECLOGUE THE FIRST

London.—Before the Door of a Lecture Room.

Enter TRACY, meeting INKEL.

Ink. YOU'RE too late.

Tra. Is it over?

Ink. Nor will be this hour.

But the benches are cramm'd like a garden
 in flower,

With the pride of our belles, who have
 made it the fashion;

So, instead of 'beaux arts,' we may say 'la
 belle passion'

For learning, which lately has taken the
 lead in 5

The world, and set all the fine gentlemen
 reading.

Tra. I know it too well, and have worn
 out my patience

With studying to study your new publica-
 tions.

There's Vamp, Scamp, and Mouthy, and
 Wordswords and Co.

With their damnable——

Ink. Hold, my good friend, do you
 know 10

Whom you speak to?

Tra. Right well, boy, and so does
 'the Row:

You're an author—a poet—

Ink. And think you that I
 Can stand tamely in silence, to hear you
 decry

The Muses?

Tra. Excuse me: I meant no offence
 To the Nine; though the number who
 make some pretence 15

To their favours is such—but the sub-
 ject to drop,

I am just piping hot from a publisher's
 shop,

(Next door to the pastry-cook's; so that
 when I

Cannot find the new volume I wanted to
 buy

On the bibliopole's shelves, it is only two
 paces, 20

As one finds every author in one of those
 places:)

Where I just had been skimming a charm-
 ing critique,

So studded with wit, and so sprinkled with
 Greek!

Where your friend—you know who—has
 just got such a thrashing,

That it is, as the phrase goes, extremely
 'refreshing.' 25

What a beautiful word!

Ink. Very true; 'tis so soft
 And so cooling—they use it a little too
 oft;

And the papers have got it at last—but no
 matter.

So they've cut up our friend then?

Tra. Not left him a tatter—
 Not a rag of his present or past reputa-
 tion, 30

Which they call a disgrace to the age and
 the nation.

Ink. I'm sorry to hear this! for friend-
 ship, you know——

Our poor friend!—but I thought it would
 terminate so.

Our friendship is such, I'll read nothing
 to shock it.

You don't happen to have the Review in
 your pocket? 35

Tra. No; I left a round dozen of authors
 and others

(Very sorry, no doubt, since the cause is
 a brother's)

All scrambling and jostling, like so many
 imps,

And on fire with impatience to get the next
 ..

Ink. Let us join them.

Tra. What, won't you return
 to the lecture? 40

THE BLUES

Ink. Why the place is so cramm'd,
there's no room for a spectre.
Besides, our friend Scamp is to-day so
absurd—

Tra. How can you know that till you
hear him?

Ink. I heard
Quite enough; and, to tell you the truth,
my retreat

Was from his vile nonsense, no less than
the heat. 45

Tra. I have had no great loss then?

Ink. Loss!—such a palaver!
I'd inoculate sooner my wife with the
slaver

Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two
hours

To the torrent of trash which around him
he pours,

Pump'd up with such effort, disgorged
with such labour, 50

That—come—do not make me speak
ill of one's neighbour.

Tra. I make you!

Ink. Yes, you! I said nothing until
You compell'd me, by speaking the
truth—

Tra. To speak ill!
Is that your deduction?

Ink. When speaking of Scamp ill,
I certainly follow, not set an example. 55
The fellow's a fool, an impostor, a
zany.

Tra. And the crowd of to-day shows
that one fool makes many.

But we two will be wise.

Ink. Pray, then, let us retire.

Tra. I would, but—

Ink. There must be attraction much
higher

Than Scamp, or the Jew's harp he nick-
names his lyre, 60

To call you to this hotbed.

Tra. I own it—'tis true—
A fair lady—

Ink. A spinster?

Tra. Miss Lilac.

Ink. The Blue!

The heiress!

Tra. The angel!

Ink. The devil! why, man,
Pray get out of this hobble as fast as you
can.

You wed with Miss Lilac! 'twould be
your perdition: 65

She's a poet, a chymist, a mathematician.

Tra. I say she's an angel.

Ink. Say rather an angle.
If you and she marry, you'll certainly
wrangle.

I say she's a Blue, man, as blue as the
ether.

Tra. And is that any cause for not
coming together? 70

Ink. Humph! I can't say I know any
happy alliance

Which has lately sprung up from a wed-
lock with science.

She's so learned in all things, and fond
of concerning

Herself in all matters connected with
learning,

That—

Tra. What?

Ink. I perhaps may as well hold my
tongue; 75

But there's five hundred people can tell
you you're wrong.

Tra. You forget Lady Lilac's as rich as
a Jew.

Ink. Is it miss or the cash of mamma
you pursue?

Tra. Why, Jack, I'll be frank with you
—something of both.

The girl's a fine girl.

Ink. And you feel nothing loth
To her good lady-mother's reversion; and
yet 81

Her life is as good as your own, I will bet.

Tra. Let her live, and as long as she
likes; I demand

Nothing more than the heart of her
daughter and hand.

Ink. Why that heart's in the ink-
stand—that hand on the pen. 85

Tra. A propos—Will you write me a
song now and then?

Ink. To what purpose?

Tra. You know, my dear friend,
that in prose

My talent is decent, as far as it goes;

But in rhyme—

Ink. You're a terrible stick, to be sure.

Tra. I own it: and yet, in these times,
there's no lure 90

For the heart of the fair like a stanza or
two;

And so, as I can't, will you furnish a few?

Ink. In your name?

Tra. In my name. I will copy
them out,

To slip into her hand at the very next rout.

Ink. Are you so far advanced as to
hazard this?

Tra. Why,
Do you think me subdued by a Blue-
stocking's eye, 96

So far as to tremble to tell her in rhyme

What I've told her in prose, at the least,
as sublime?

Ink. As sublime! If it be so, no need of
my Muse.

Tra. But consider, dear Inkel, she's
one of the 'Blues.' 100

Ink. As sublime!—Mr. Tracy—I've
nothing to say.

Stick to prose—As sublime!!—but I wish
you good day.

THE BLUES

Tra. Nay, stay, my dear fellow—consider—I'm wrong;
I own it; but, prithee, compose me the song.

Ink. As sublime!!

Tra. I but used the expression in haste.

Ink. That may be, Mr. Tracy, but shows damn'd bad taste. 106

Tra. I own it—I know it—acknowledge it—what

Can I say to you more?

Ink. I see what you'd be at: You disparage my parts with insidious abuse,

Till you think you can turn them best to your own use. 110

Tra. And is that not a sign I respect them?

Ink. Why that To be sure makes a difference.

Tra. I know what is what: And you, who're a man of the gay world no less

Than a poet of t'other, may easily guess That I never could mean, by a word, to offend 115

A genius like you, and moreover, my friend.

Ink. No doubt; you by this time should know what is due

To a man of—but come—let us shake hands.

Tra. You knew, And you know, my dear fellow, how heartily I

Whatever you publish, am ready to buy. *Ink.* That's my bookseller's business;

I care not for sale; 121

Indeed the best poems at first rather fail. There were Renegade's epics, and

Botherby's plays,

And my own grand romance—

Tra. Had its full share of praise. I myself saw it puff'd in the 'Old Girl's Review.' 125

Ink. What Review?

Tra. 'Tis the English 'Journal de Trevoux;'

A clerical work of our Jesuits at home. Have you never yet seen it?

Ink. That pleasure's to come.

Tra. Make haste then.

Ink. Why so?

Tra. I have heard people say That it threaten'd to give up the ghost t'other day. 130

Ink. Well, that is a sign of some spirit.

Tra. No doubt.

Shall you be at the Countess of Fiddlecome's rout?

Ink. I've a card, and shall go: but at present, as soon

As friend Scamp shall be pleased to step down from the moon

(Where he seems to be soaring in search of his wits), 135

And an interval grants from his lecturing fits,

I'm engaged to the Lady Bluebottle's collation,

To partake of a luncheon and learn'd conversation:

'Tis a sort of reunion for Scamp, on the days Of his lecture, to treat him with cold tongue and praise. 140

And I own, for my own part, that 'tis not unpleasant.

Will you go? There's Miss Lilac will also be present.

Tra. That 'metal's attractive.'

Ink. No doubt—to the pocket.

Tra. You should rather encourage my passion than shock it.

But let us proceed; for I think by the hum— 145

Ink. Very true; let us go, then, before they can come,

Or else we'll be kept here an hour at their levee,

On the rack of cross questions, by all the blue bevy.

Hark! Zounds, they'll be on us; I know by the drone

Of old Botherby's spouting ex-cathedrâ tone. 150

Ay! there he is at it. Poor Scamp! better join

Your friends, or he'll pay you back in your own coin.

Tra. All fair; 'tis but lecture for lecture.

Ink. That's clear.

But for God's sake let's go, or the Bore will be here.

Come, come: nay, I'm off. [*Exit INKEL.*

Tra. You are right, and I'll follow;

'Tis high time for a 'Sic me servavit Apollo.' 156

And yet we shall have the whole crew on our kibes,

Blues, dandies, and dowagers, and second-hand scribes,

All flocking to moisten their exquisite throttles

With a glass of Madeira at Lady Bluebottle's. [*Exit TRACY.*

ECLOGUE THE SECOND

An Apartment in the House of LADY BLUEBOTTLE.—A Table prepared.

SIR RICHARD BLUEBOTTLE *solus.*

Was there ever a man who was married so sorry?

Like a fool, I must needs do the thing in a hurry.

My life is reversed, and my quiet destroyed;

THE BLUES

My days, which once pass'd in so gentle a void,
 Must now, every hour of the twelve, be employ'd;
 The twelve, do I say?—of the whole twenty-four,
 Is there one which I dare call my own any more?
 What with driving and visiting, dancing, and dining,
 What with learning, and teaching, and scribbling, and shining
 In science and art, I'll be cursed if I know
 Myself from my wife; for although we are two,
 Yet she somehow contrives that all things shall be done
 In a style which proclaims us eternally one.
 But the thing of all things which distresses me more
 Than the bills of the week (though they trouble me sore)
 Is the numerous, humorous, backbiting crew
 Of scribblers, wits, lecturers, white, black, and blue,
 Who are brought to my house as an inn, to my cost—
 For the bill here, it seems, is defray'd by the host—
 No pleasure! no leisure! no thought for my pains,
 But to hear a vile jargon which addles my brains;
 A smatter and chatter, glean'd out of reviews,
 By the rag, tag, and bobtail, of those they call 'BLUES';
 A rabble who know not—But soft, here they come!
 Would to God I were deaf! as I'm not, I'll be dumb.

Enter LADY BLUEBOTTLE, MISS LILAC, LADY BLUEMOUNT, MR. BOTHERBY, INKEL, TRACY, Miss MAZARINE, and others, with SCAMP the Lecturer, &c. &c.
Lady Blueb. Ah! Sir Richard, good morning: I've brought you some friends.
Sir Rich. [bows, and afterwards aside.] If friends, they're the first.
Lady Blueb. But the luncheon attends. I pray ye be seated, 'sans cérémonie.'
Mr. Scamp, you're fatigued; take your chair there next me. [They all sit.
Sir Rich. [aside.] If he does, his fatigue is to come.
Lady Blueb. Mr. Tracy—
Lady Bluemount—Miss Lilac—be pleased, pray, to place ye;

And you, Mr. Botherby—
Both. Oh, my dear Lady, I obey.
Lady Blueb. Mr. Inkel, I ought to upbraid ye:
 You were not at the lecture.
Ink. Excuse me, I was;
 But the heat forced me out in the best part—alas!
 And when—
Lady Blueb. To be sure it was broiling; but then
 You have lost such a lecture!
Both. The best of the ten.
Tra. How can you know that? there are two more.
Both. Because
 I defy him to beat this day's wondrous applause.
 The very walls shook.
Ink. Oh, if that be the test,
 I allow our friend Scamp has this day done his best.
Miss Lilac, permit me to help you;—a wing?
Miss Lil. No more, sir, I thank you.
 Who lectures next spring?
Both. Dick Dunder.
Ink. That is, if he lives.
Miss Lil. And why not?
Ink. No reason whatever, save that he's a sot.
Lady Bluemount! a glass of Madeira?
Lady Bluem. With pleasure.
Ink. How does your friend Wordsworths, that Windermere treasure?
 Does he stick to his lakes, like the leeches he sings,
 And their gatherers, as Homer sung warriors and kings?
Lady Bluem. He has just got a place.
Ink. As a footman?
Lady Bluem. For shame!
 Nor profane with your sneers so poetic a name.
Ink. Nay, I meant him no evil, but pitied his master;
 For the poet of pedlars 'twere, sure, no disaster
 To wear a new livery; the more, as 'tis not
 The first time he has turn'd both his creed and his coat.
Lady Bluem. For shame! I repeat. If Sir George could but hear—
Lady Blueb. Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear, 'Tis his way.
Sir Rich. But this place—
Ink. Is perhaps like friend Scamp's, a lecturer's.
Lady Bluem. Excuse me—'tis one in the 'Stamps':
 He is made a collector.

THE BLUES

Tra. Collector! *How?*
Sir Rich. What?
Miss Lil. I shall think of him oft when I buy
a new hat: 61
There his works will appear—
Lady Bluem. Sir, they reach to the
Ink. I shan't go so far—I can have them
at Grange's.
Lady Bluem. Oh fie!
Miss Lil. And for shame!
Lady Bluem. You're too bad.
Both. Very good!
Lady Bluem. How good?
Lady Blueb. He means nought—'tis his
phrase.
Lady Bluem. He grows rude.
Lady Blueb. He means nothing; nay, ask
him. 66
Lady Bluem. Pray, Sir! did you mean
What you say?
Ink. Never mind if he did: 'twill be seen
That whatever he means won't alloy what
he says.
Both. Sir?
Ink. Pray be content with your por-
tion of praise; 69
'Twas in your defence.
Both. If you please, with submission,
I can make out my own.
Ink. It would be your perdition.
While you live, my dear Botherby, never
defend
Yourself or your works; but leave both to
a friend.
A propos—Is your play then accepted at
last?
Both. At last?
Ink. Why I thought—that 's to say—
there had pass'd 75
A few green-room whispers, which hinted,
—you know
That the taste of the actors at best is so
so.
Both. Sir, the green-room's in rapture,
and so's the Committee.
Ink. Ay—yours are the plays for ex-
citing our pity
And fear, as the Greek says: for 'purging
the mind,' 80
I doubt if you'll leave us an equal be-
hind.
Both. I have written the prologue, and
meant to have pray'd
For a spice of your wit in an epilogue's
aid.
Ink. Well, time enough yet, when the
play's to be play'd. 84
Is it cast yet?
Both. The actors are fighting for parts,
As is usual in that most litigious of arts.
Lady Blueb. We'll all make a party, and
go the first night.

Tra. And you promised the epilogue,
Inkel.
Ink. Not quite.
However, to save my friend Botherby
trouble,
I'll do what I can, though my pains must
be double. 90
Tra. Why so?
Ink. To do justice to what goes before.
Both. Sir, I'm happy to say, I've no
fears on that score.
Your parts, Mr. Inkel, are—
Ink. Never mind mine;
Stick to those of your play, which is quite
your own line.
Lady Bluem. You're a fugitive writer, I
think, sir, of rhymes? 95
Ink. Yes, ma'am; and a fugitive reader
sometimes.
On Wordswords, for instance, I seldom
alight,
Or on Mouthey, his friend, without taking
to flight.
Lady Bluem. Sir, your taste is too com-
mon; but time and posterity
Will right these great men, and this age's
severity 100
Become its reproach.
Ink. I've no sort of objection,
So I'm not of the party to take the infec-
tion.
Lady Blueb. Perhaps you have doubts
that they ever will take?
Ink. Not at all; on the contrary, those
of the lake
Have taken already, and still will con-
tinue 105
To take—what they can, from a groat to
a guinea,
Of pension or place;—but the subject's a
bore.
Lady Bluem. Well, sir, the time's
coming.
Ink. Scamp! don't you feel sore?
What say you to this?
Scamp. They have merit, I own;
Though their system's absurdity keeps it
unknown. 110
Ink. Then why not unearth it in one of
your lectures?
Scamp. It is only time past which comes
under my strictures.
Lady Blueb. Come, a truce with all
tartness;—the joy of my heart
Is to see Nature's triumph o'er all that is
art.
Wild Nature!—Grand Shakspeare!
Both. And down Aristotle! 115
Lady Bluem. Sir George thinks exactly
with Lady Bluebottle:
And my Lord Seventy-four, who protects
our dear Bard,
And who gave him his place, has the
greatest regard

THE BLUES

For the poet, who, singing of pedlars and

Has found out the way to dispense with
Parnassus. 120

Tra. And you, Scamp!—

Scamp. I needs must confess I'm
embarrass'd.

Ink. Don't call upon Scamp, who's
already so harass'd

With old *schools*, and new *schools*, and no
schools, and all *schools*.

Tra. Well, one thing is certain, that
some must be fools.

I should like to know who.

Ink. And I should not be sorry 125
To know who are *not*:—it would save us
some worry.

Lady Blueb. A truce with remark, and
let nothing control

This 'feast of our reason, and flow of the
soul.'

Oh! my dear Mr. Botherby! sympathise!
—I

Now feel such a rapture, I'm ready to
fly, 130

I feel so elastic—'so buoyant—so buoy-
ant!'

Ink. Tracy! open the window.

Tra. I wish her much joy on't.

Both. For God's sake, my Lady Blue-
bottle, check not

This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot
Upon earth. Give it way: 'tis an impulse
which lifts 135

Our spirits from earth; the sublimest of
gifts;

For which poor Prometheus was chain'd
to his mountain:

'Tis the source of all sentiment—feeling's
true fountain;

'Tis the Vision of Heaven upon Earth: 'tis
the gas

Of the soul: 'tis the seizing of shades as
they pass, 140

And making them substance: 'tis some-
thing divine:—

Ink. Shall I help you, my friend, to a
little more wine?

Both. I thank you; not any more, sir,
till I dine.

Ink. A propos—Do you dine with Sir
Humphry to-day?

Tra. I should think with *Duke Humphry*
was more in your way. 145

Ink. It might be of yore; but we authors
now look

To the Knight, as a landlord, much more
than the Duke.

The truth is, each writer now quite at his
ease is,

And (except with his publisher) dines
where he pleases.

But 'tis now nearly five, and I must to the
Park. 150

Tra. And I'll take a turn with you
there till 'tis dark.

And you, Scamp—
Scamp. Excuse me! I must to my notes,

For my lecture next week.

Ink. He must mind whom he quotes
Out of 'Elegant Extracts.'

Lady Blueb. Well, now we break
up;

But remember Miss Diddle invites us to
sup. 155

Ink. Then at two hours past midnight
we all meet again,

For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and
champagne!

Tra. And the sweet lobster salad!
Both. I honour that meal;

For 'tis then that our feelings most
genuinely—feel.

Ink. True; feeling is truest *then*, far
beyond question: 160

I wish to the gods 'twas the same with
digestion!

Lady Blueb. Pshaw!—never mind that;
for one moment of feeling

Is worth—God knows what.

Ink. 'Tis at least worth concealing
For itself, or what follows—But here
comes your carriage.

Sir Rich. [aside.] I wish all these people
were d——d with my marriage! 165
[Exeunt.]

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

BY

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED BY THE AUTHOR OF 'WAT TYLER'

'A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.'

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that 'One fool makes many;' and it hath been poetically observed—

'That fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'—POPE.

If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be *worse*. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegade intolerance, and impious cant, of the poem by the author of 'Wat Tyler,' are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself—containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem—a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed 'Satanic School,' the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature; thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, except in his imagination, such a School, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom Mr. S. imagines, like Scrub, to have 'talked of *him*;' for they laughed consumedly.

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good, in the charities of life, to their fellow-creatures, in any one year, than Mr. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1stly, Is Mr. Southey the author of 'Wat Tyler'?

2ndly, Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3rdly, Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, 'a rancorous renegade'?

4thly, Is he not poet laureate, with his own lines on Martin the regicide staring him in the face?

And, 5thly, Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare *he* call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may?

I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding, its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less than that Mr. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the 'Anti-jacobin,' by his present patrons. Hence all this 'skimble-scamble stuff' about 'Satanic,' and so forth. However, it is worthy of him—'*qualis ab inepto*.'

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public in the following poem, they may thank Mr. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared—had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonise a monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king,—inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France,—like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new 'Vision,' his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgments in the next world, is like his own judgment in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not 'like a school-divine,' but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of heaven; and Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath,' Pulci's 'Morgante Maggiore,' Swift's 'Tale of a Tub,'

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and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, &c. may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious.

Q. R.

*. * Mr. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgment, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. Mr. Southey laudeth grievously 'one Mr. Landor,' who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the poet laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called '*Gebir*.' Who could suppose, that in this same Gebir the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend Mr. Southey's heaven,—yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious sovereign:

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view; and he exclaims to his ghostly guide)—

'Arise, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.
He too amongst my ancestors! I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?'

'Alas, O king!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east.'
'He was a warrior then, nor fear'd the gods?'
'Gebir, he fear'd the demons, not the gods,
Though them indeed his daily face adored;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squander'd, as stones to exercise a sling,
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice—
Oh madness of mankind! address'd, adored!'

Gebir, p. 28.

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of 'great moral lessons' are apt to be found in strange company.

I

SAINT PETER sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty, and the lock was
dull,

So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era 'eighty-eight'

The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger
pull,
And 'a pull altogether,' as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another
way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er th' ethereal
blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton
whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care
below;

Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in
quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no
doubt,
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)
For some resource to turn himself
about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn
out
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named
his clerks.

V

This was a handsome board—at least for
heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many conquerors' cars were daily
driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,

Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust—

The page was so besmear'd with blood and dust.

VI

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
What angels shrink from: even the very devil

On this occasion his own work abhor'd,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:

Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,

It almost quench'd his innate thirst of evil.

(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion—

'Tis, that he has both generals in reversion.)

VII

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,

Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,

And heaven none—they form the tyrant's lease,

With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;

'Twill one day finish: meantime they increase,

'With seven heads and ten horns,' and all in front,

Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born

Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one

Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn

Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,

A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died—but left his subjects still behind,

One half as mad—and t'other no less blind.

IX

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:

His burial made some pomp; there was profusion

Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth

Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion.

For these things may be bought at their true worth;

Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,

Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,

Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.

There throb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall;

And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,

It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were

The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;

But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare

As the mere million's base unummied clay—

Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He's dead—and upper earth with him has done;

He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone

For him, unless he left a German will:
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?

In whom his qualities are reining still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,

Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII

'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will

Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:

I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill

By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know
'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd

For hoping no one else may e'er be so;

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I know my catechism; I know we're
cramm'd
With the best doctrines till we quite o'er-
flow;
I know that all save England's church
have sham'd,
And that the other twice two hundred
churches
And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad
purchase.

xv

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can
wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd
fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost everybody born to die.

xvi

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo!
there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of
late—
A rushing sound of wind, and stream,
and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a
saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, 'There's another star gone out, I
think!'

xvii

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his
eyes—
At which St. Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his
nose:
'Saint porter,' said the angel, 'prithee
rise!
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as
glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly
dyes:
To which the saint replied, 'Well, what's
the matter?
'Is Lucifer come back with all this
clatter?'

xviii

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the
Third is dead.'
'And who is George the Third?' replied
the apostle:
'What George? what Third?' 'The king
of England,' said
The angel. 'Well! he won't find kings
to jostle

Him on his way; but does he wear his
head?

Because the last we saw here had a
tustle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's
good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

xix

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep
a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to
advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my
own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my
brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

xx

'And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took
him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by
jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenu! The
skin
Of St. Bartholomew, which makes his
cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd
his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden
head.

xxi

'But had it come up here upon its shoul-
ders,
There would have been a different tale
to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saint's beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
And so this very foolish head heaven
solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.'

xxii

The angel answer'd, 'Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all
entire,
And never knew much what it was about—
He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no
doubt:
My business and your own is not to
inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
Which is to act as we are bid to do.'

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile,
or Indus,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them
an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely
blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent
wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-
toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts en-
graved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded
space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself with-
in;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce
knew whither
His guards had led him, though they
gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels all are
Tories).

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and
made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes

O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when
ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in 'Melville's
Sound.'

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued
beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner stream-
ing
Victorious from some world-o'erthrow-
ing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be
teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the
night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions,
saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey
raving.

XXIX

'Twas the archangel Michael; all men
know
The make of angels and archangels,
since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to
show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels'
prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain their
merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all
glory
And good arise; the portal past—he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and
saints hoary—
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very
sorry
To state, they were not older than St.
Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little
sweeter).

XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down
before
That arch-angelic hierarchy, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er
nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Master's
service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

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XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good
and ill;

Such was their power, that neither could
forget

His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos'
the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we
know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to
pay

A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that the 'sons of God', like those
of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might
show

From the same book, in how polite a
way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 'twould take up
hours.

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,

But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an
act

As sets aside the slightest thought of
trick.

'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresh-
holds is

The place where Death's grand cause is
argued o'er,

And souls despatch'd to that world or
to this;

And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his
Brightness

There pass'd a mutual glance of great
politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern
beau,

But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to
tend;

He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,

But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old
Castilian

Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means
could or should

Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endowed
With better sense and hearts, whom
history mentions,

Who long have 'paved hell with their good
intentions.'

Michael began: 'What wouldst thou with
this man,

Now dead, and brought before the
Lord? What ill

Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and
do thy will,

If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have way.'

XXXIX

'Michael!' replied the Prince of Air, 'even
here,

Before the Gate of him thou servest,
must

I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,

So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor
lust

Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

XL

'Look to our earth, or rather mine; it was,
Once, more thy master's: but I triumph
not

In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:

With all the myriads of bright worlds
which pass

In worship round him, he may have
forgot

Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their
kings,—

XLI

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord: and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown
so bad,

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That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much
more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I
worse.

XLII

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless,
weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to
reign,
The world and he both wore a different
form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through many
a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their
clime.

XLIII

'He came to his sceptre young; he leaves
it old:
Look to the state in which he found his
realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but over-
whelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but
glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

'Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the
past
Of ages, since mankind have known the
rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls
amass'd
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's
school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd
with the slain.

XLV

'He ever warr'd with freedom and the
free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign
foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found George the Third their first
opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs
want;

XLVI

'I know he was a constant consort;
own
He was a decent sire, and middling
lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper
shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for
those
Millions who found him what oppression
chose.

XLVII

'The New World shook him off; the Old
yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if
not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many
thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues;
drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now
forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them,
wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them
quake!

XLVIII

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on
earth, implored
A part of that vast *all* they held of old,—
Freedom to worship—not alone your
Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter!
Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not
abhor'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX

'True! he allow'd them to pray God; but
as
A consequence of prayer, refused the
law
Which would have placed them upon the
same base
With those who did not hold the saints
in awe.
But here Saint Peter started from his
place,
And cried, 'You may the prisoner with-
draw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this
Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd my-
self!

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L

'Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be
sure!'

'Saint!' replied Satan, 'you do well to
avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites
endure;
And if to this exchange you should be
given,
I'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven!'

LI

Here Michael interposed: 'Good saint!
and devil!

Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.

Saint Peter! you were wont to be more
civil!

Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,

And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.

Have you got more to say?'—'No.'—'If
you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses.'

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy
hand,

Which stirr'd with its electric qualities
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our
skies;

Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions

As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation

Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no
station

Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination

Or business carries them in search of
game,

They may range freely—being damn'd the
same.

LIV

They're proud of this—as very well they
may,

It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
Stuck in their loins; or like to an 'entré'

Up the back stairs, or such free-
masonry.

I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits
be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than
these.

Lv

When the great signal ran from heaven to
hell—

About ten million times the distance
reckon'd

From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a
second,

For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which,

dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a
year,

If that the *summer* is not too severe:

I say that I can tell—'twas half a minute;
I know the solar beams take up more
time

Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they
begin it;

But then their telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win
it

'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their
own clime.

The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal—the devil not half a
day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd

(I've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, ere a squall); it near'd,

And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an aerial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,

Or was steer'd (I am doubtful of the
grammar

Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza
stammer;—

LVIII

But take your choice): and then it grew a
cloud;

And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.
But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a
crowd

Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw
these;

They shadow'd with their myriads space;
their loud

And varied cries were like those of wild
geese

(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realised the phrase of 'hell broke
loose.'

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LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued 'By Jasus!'—
'What's your wull?'
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
'Our president is going to war, I guess.'

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summon'd by this grand 'subpœna,'
To
Try if kings mayn't be damn'd like me or you.

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
He turn'd all colours—as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon by night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan:
'Why—
My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,
I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
Our difference is *political*, and I
Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you: and this
Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

LXIII

'Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of earth and hell
produce;

'Tis even superfluous, since two honest,
clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
Our time, nay, our eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, 'twill stretch our immortality.'

LXIV

Satan replied, 'To me the matter is
Indifferent, in a personal point of view:
I can have fifty better souls than this
With far less trouble than we have gone
through
Already; and I merely argued his
Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I've kings enough below, God
knows!'

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd 'multi-
faced'
By multo-scribbling Southey). 'Then
we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with
all
The rest,' quoth Michael: 'Who may be so
graced
As to speak first? there's choice
enough—who shall
It be?' Then Satan answer'd, 'There are
many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well
as any.'

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking
sprite
Upon the instant started from the
throng,
Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick
long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or
wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, 'My friends
of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst
these clouds;
So let's to business: why this general
call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 'tis for an election that they
bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your
vote?'

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LXVIII

'Sir,' replied Michael, 'you mistake; these

Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know.'

'Then I presume those gentlemen with
wings,'

Said Wilkes, 'are cherubs; and that soul
below

Looks much like George the Third, but to
my mind

A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?'

LXIX

'He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds,' the Angel
said;

'If you have aught to arraign in him, the
tomb

Gives licence to the humblest beggar's
head

To lift itself against the loftiest.'—'Some,'
Said Wilkes, 'don't wait to see them laid
in lead,

For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath
the sun.'

LXX

'Above the sun repeat, then, what thou
hast

To urge against him,' said the Arch-
angel. 'Why,'

Replied the spirit, 'since old scores are
past,

Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,

With all his Lords and Commons: in
the sky

I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

'Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be
unwilling

To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago,
and still in

Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his "habeas corpus" into
heaven.'

LXXII

'Wilkes,' said the Devil, 'I understand all
this;

You turn'd to half a courtier ere you
died,

And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side

Of Charon's ferry; you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded; whatso'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost
your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neigh-
bour.

LXXIII

'However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the
spit

Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,

His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;

I'll have him *gagg'd*—'twas one of his own
bills.

LXXIV

'Call Junius!' From the crowd a shadow
stalk'd,

And at the name there was a general
squeeze,

So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
In comfort, at their own aerial ease,

But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to
be balk'd,

As we shall see), and jostled hands and
knees,

Like wind compress'd and pent within a
bladder,

Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came—a tall, thin, grey-
hair'd figure,

That look'd as it had been a shade on
earth;

Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its
birth;

Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage
mirth;

But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant—to *what*, none
could say.

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the
features were;

The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to

They varied like a dream—now here,
now there;

And several people swore from out the
press,

They knew him perfectly; and one could
swear

He was his father: upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's
brother:

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LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at
least
As oft as they their minds; though in full
sight

He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself—he was so volatile and thin.

LXXXIII

The moment that you had pronounced
him *one*,
Presto! his face changed, and he was
another;
And when that change was hardly well put
on,
It varied, till I don't think his own
mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to
t'other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary 'Iron Mask.'

LXXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would
seem—
'Three gentlemen at once' (as sagely
says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might
deem
That he was not even *one*; now many
rays
Were flashing round him; and now a thick
steam
Hid him from sight—like fogs on Lon-
don days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to
people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX

I've an hypothesis—'tis quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be
blown;
It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call
Was *really, truly*, nobody at all.

LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily
view
Them written without heads; and books,
we see,
Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody

For certain sure to claim them as his
due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will
bother
The world to say if *there* be mouth or
author.

LXXXII

'And who and what art thou?' the Arch-
angel said.
'For that you may consult my title-
page,'
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
'If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.'—'Canst thou
upbraid,'
Continued Michael, 'George Rex, or
allege
Aught further?' Junius answer'd, 'You
had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

LXXXIII

'My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb.'
'Repent'st thou not,' said Michael, 'of
some past
Exaggeration? something which may
doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter—is it not so?—in thy gloom
Of passion?'—'Passion!' cried the phan-
tom dim,
'I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV

'What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!' So
spoke
Old 'Norminis Umbra'; and while speak-
ing yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, 'Don't forget
To call George Washington, and John
Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;—but at this time there
was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom
stirr'd.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the
aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look'd as if his journey
cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he
laid,
'What's this?' cried Michael; 'why,
'tis not a ghost?'
'I know it,' quoth the incubus; 'but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to
me.

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LXXXVI

'Confound the renegade! I have sprain'd
My left wing, he's so heavy; one would
think

Some of his works about his neck were
chain'd.

But to the point; while hovering o'er
the brink

Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,

And stooping, caught this fellow at a
libel—

No less on history than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII

'The former is the devil's scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the
affair

Belongs to all of us, you understand.

I snatch'd him up just as you see him
there,

And brought him off for sentence out of
hand:

I've scarcely been ten minutes in the
air—

At least a quarter it can hardly be;

I dare say that his wife is still at tea.'

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, 'I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time
here;

A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:

But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus

dear:

We had the poor wretch safe (without
being bored

With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

'But since he's here, let's see what he has
done.'

'Done!' cried Asmodeus, 'he antici-
pates

The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the

Fates.

Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's,

prates?'

'Let's hear,' quoth Michael, 'what he has
to say:

You know we're bound to that in every
way.'

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience,
which

By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and

pitch

His voice into that awful note of woe

To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in
flow;

But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be
spurr'd

Into recitative, in great dismay

Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long

array;

And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,

And cried, 'For God's sake stop, my
friend! 'twere best—

Non Di, non homines—you know the rest.'

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the
throng,

Which seem'd to hold all verse in detes-
tation;

The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation

Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not
long

Before, to profit by a new occasion:

The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd,
'What! what!

Pye come again? No more—no more of
that!'

XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,

When Castlereagh has been up long
enough

(Before he was first minister of state,

I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried
'Off, off!'

As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,

The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the face,

With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which
gave

A smart and sharper-looking sort of
grace

To his whole aspect, which, though rather
grave,

Was by no means so ugly as his case;

But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony '*de se*.'

XCv

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd
the noise

With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling

voice,

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Which now and then will make a slight
inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly over-
crow'd;
And now the bard could plead his own bad
cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas
his way
Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 'twould
delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to
dread),
And take up rather more time than a
day,
To name his works—he would but cite a
few—
'Wat Tyler'—'Rhymes on Blenheim'—
'Waterloo.'

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings what-
ever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas
clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin—
Had turn'd his coat—and would have
turn'd his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had
call'd
Reviewing 'the ungentle craft,' and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd—
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been
maul'd;
He had written much blank verse, and
blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life:—here turn-
ing round
To Satan, 'Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most
allures
The pious purchaser; and there's no
ground
For fear, for I can choose my own re-
viewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.'

C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. 'Well, if you,
With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are
few
Whose memoirs could be render'd more
divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you
shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my
own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well
blown.

CI

'But talking about trumpets, here's my
Vision!
Now you shall judge, all people; yes,
you shall
Judge with my judgment, and by my de-
cision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come, heaven,
hell, and all,
Like King Alfonso. When I thus see
double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.'

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, saints,
Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the con-
tents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they
sprang,
Like lightning, off from his 'melodious
twang.'

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied
their pinnions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to
hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own
dominions—
(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump—but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not
blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his
keys,
And at the fifth line knock'd the poet
down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath,
whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

In his own den, to scrawl some 'Life' or
'Vision,'
As Welborn says—'the devil turn'd pre-
cision.'

CVI

He first sank to the bottom—like his
works,
But soon rose to the surface—like him-
self;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like
corks,
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all de-
lusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have
shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into
heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

THE AGE OF BRONZE

OR,

CARMEN SECULARE ET ANNUS HAUD MIRABILIS

'Impar Congressus Achilli.'

THE 'good old times'—all times when old
are good—
Are gone; the present might be if they
would;
Great things have been, and are, and
greater still
Want little of mere mortals but their will:
A wider space, a greener field, is given
To those who play their 'tricks before high
heaven,'
I know not if the angels weep, but men
Have wept enough—for what?—to weep
again!

II

All is exploded—be it good or bad. 9
Reader! remember when thou wert a lad,
Then Pitt was all; or, if not all, so much,
His very rival almost deem'd him such.
We, we have seen the intellectual race
Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face—
Athos and Ida, with a dashing sea 15
Of eloquence between, which flow'd all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian
shore.
But where are they—the rivals! a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet.
How peaceful and how powerful is the
grave, 21
Which hushes all! a calm, unstormy wave,
Which oversweeps the world. The theme
is old
Of 'dust to dust;' but half its tale untold:

Time tempers not its terrors—still the
worm 25
Winds its cold folds, the tomb preserves
its form,
Varied above, but still alike below;
The urn may shine, the ashes will not glow,
Though Cleopatra's mummy cross the sea
O'er which from empire she lured An-
thony; 30
Though Alexander's urn a show be grown
On shores he wept to conquer, though un-
known—
How vain, how worse than vain, at length
appear
The madman's wish, the Macedonian's
tear!
He wept for worlds to conquer—half the
earth 35
Knows not his name, or but his death, and
birth,
And desolation; while his native Greece
Hath all of desolation, save its peace.
He 'wept for worlds to conquer'! he who
ne'er
Conceived the globe, he panted not to
spare! 40
With even the busy Northern Isle un-
known,
Which holds his urn, and never knew his
throne.

III

But where is he, the modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made monarchs draw
his car;

THE AGE OF BRONZE

The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
 To turn the bear's, and wolf's, and fox's
 guide;
 And backward to the den of his despair
 The forest monarch shrinks, but finds no
 lair!
 Oh ye! and each, and all! Oh France!
 who found
 Thy long fair fields plough'd up as hostile
 ground,
 Disputed foot by foot, till treason, still
 His only victor, from Montmartre's hill
 Look'd down o'er trampled Paris! and
 thou Isle,
 Which seest Etruria from thy ramparts
 smile,
 Thou momentary shelter of his pride,
 Till woo'd by danger, his yet weeping
 bride!
 Oh, France! retaken by a single march,
 Whose path was through one long tri-
 umphal arch!
 Oh, bloody and most bootless Waterloo!
 Which proves how fools may have their
 fortune too,
 Won half by blunder, half by treachery:
 Oh, dull Saint Helen! with thy gaoler
 nigh—
 Hear! hear Prometheus from his rock
 appeal
 To earth, air, ocean, all that felt or feel
 His power and glory, all who yet shall hear
 A name eternal as the rolling year;
 He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
 So oft, so vainly—learn to do no wrong!
 A single step into the right had made
 This man the Washington of worlds be-
 tray'd:
 A single step into the wrong has given
 His name a doubt to all the winds of
 heaven;
 The reed of Fortune, and of thrones the
 rod,
 Of Fame the Moloch or the demigod;
 His country's Caesar, Europe's Hannibal,
 Without their decent dignity of fall.
 Yet Vanity herself had better taught
 A surer path even to the fame he sought,
 By pointing out on history's fruitless page
 Ten thousand conquerors for a single sage.
 While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to
 heaven,
 Calming the lightning which he thence hath
 riven,
 Or drawing from the no less kindled earth
 Freedom and peace to that which boasts
 his birth;
 While Washington's a watchword, such
 as ne'er
 Shall sink while there's an echo left to air:
 While even the Spaniard's thirst of gold
 and war
 Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar!
 Alas! why must the same Atlantic wave
 Which wafted freedom gird a tyrant's
 grave
 The king of kings, and yet of slaves the
 slave,
 Who burst the chains of millions to re-
 new
 The very fetters which his arm broke
 through,
 And crush'd the rights of Europe and his
 own,
 To flit between a dungeon and a throne?
 VI
 But 'twill not be—the spark's awaken'd—
 lo!
 The swarthy Spaniard feels his former
 glow;
 The same high spirit which beat back the
 Moor
 Through eight long ages of alternate gore
 Revives—and where? in that avenging
 clime
 Where Spain was once synonymous with
 crime,
 Where Cortes and Pizarro's banner flew,
 The infant world redeems her name of
 'New.'
 'Tis the old aspiration breathed afresh,
 To kindle souls within degraded flesh,
 Such as repulsed the Persian from the
 shore
 Where Greece was—No! she still is Greece
 once more.
 One common cause makes myriads of one
 breast,
 Slaves of the East, or helots of the West:
 On Andes' and on Athos' peaks un-
 furl'd,
 The self-same standard streams o'er either
 world:
 The Athenian wears again Harmodius'
 sword;
 The Chili chief abjures his foreign lord;
 The Spartan knows himself once more a
 Greek,
 Young Freedom plumes the crest of each
 cacique;
 Debating despots, hemm'd on either
 shore,
 Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic's
 roar;
 Through Calpe's strait the rolling tides
 advance,
 Sweep slightly by the half-tamed land of
 France,
 Dash o'er the old Spaniard's cradle, and
 would fain
 Unite Ausonia to the mighty main:
 But driven from thence awhile, yet not for
 aye,
 Break o'er th' Ægean, mindful of the day
 Of Salamis!—there, there the waves arise,
 Not to be lull'd by tyrant victories.

THE AGE OF BRONZE

Lone, lost, abandon'd in their utmost
need ²⁹⁰

By Christians, unto whom they gave their
creed,

The desolated lands, the ravaged isle,
The foster'd feud encouraged to beguile,
The aid evaded, and the cold delay,
Prolong'd but in the hope to make a
prey;— ²⁹⁵

These, these shall tell the tale, and Greece
can show

The false friend worse than the infuriate
foe.

But this is well: Greeks only should free
Greece,

Not the barbarian, with his mask of peace.
How should the autocrat of bondage be?
The king of serfs, and set the nations free?
Better still serve the haughty Mussulman,
Than swell the Cossaque's prowling
caravan;

Better still toil for masters, than await,
The slave of slaves, before a Russian
gate,— ³⁰⁵

Number'd by hordes, a human capital,
A live estate, existing but for thrall,
Lotted by thousands, as a meet reward
For the first courtier in the Czar's regard;
While their immediate owner never tastes
His sleep, *sans* dreaming of Siberia's
wastes: ³¹¹

Better succumb even to their own despair,
And drive the camel than purvey the bear.

VII

But not alone within the hoariest clime
Where Freedom dates her birth with that
of Time, ³¹⁵

And not alone where, plunged in night, a
crowd

Of Incas darken to a dubious cloud,
The dawn revives: renown'd, romantic
Spain

Holds back the invader from her soil
again.

Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic
horde ³²⁰

Demand her fields as lists to prove the
sword;

Not now the Vandal or the Visigoth
Pollute the plains, alike abhorring both;
Nor old Pelayo on his mountain rears
The warlike fathers of a thousand years.
That seed is sown and reap'd, as oft the
Moor ³²⁶

Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.
Long in the peasant's song or poet's page
Has dwelt the memory of Abencerrage;

The Zegri, and the captive victors, flung
Back to the barbarous realm from whence
they sprung. ³³¹

But these are gone—their faith, their
swords, their sway,

Yet left more anti-christian foes than they;

The bigot monarch, and the butcher priest,
The Inquisition, with her burning feast,
The faith's red 'auto,' fed with human
fuel, ³³⁶

While sate the catholic Moloch, calmly
cruel,

Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of agony!

The stern or feeble sovereign, one or both
By turns; the haughtiness whose pride was
sloth; ³⁴¹

The long degenerate noble; the debased
Hidalgo, and the peasant less disgraced,
But more degraded; the unpeopled realm;
The once proud navy which forgot the
helm; ³⁴⁵

The once impervious phalanx disarray'd;
The idle forge that form'd Toledo's blade;
The foreign wealth that flow'd on ev'ry
shore,

Save hers who earn'd it with the natives'
gore;

The very language which might vie with
Rome's, ³⁵⁰

And once was known to nations like
their homes,

Neglected or forgotten:—such was Spain;
But such she is not, nor shall be again.

These worst, these *home* invaders, felt and
feel

The new Numantine soul of old Castile;
Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor! ³⁵⁶

The bull of Phalaris renews his roar;
Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo! not in vain

Revive the cry!—'Iago! and close Spain!'
Yes, close her with your armed bosoms
round, ³⁶⁰

And form the barrier which Napoleon
found,—

The exterminating war, the desert plain,
The streets without a tenant, save the slain;

The wild sierra, with its wilder troop
Of vulture-plumed guerrillas, on the stoop

For their incessant prey; the desperate
wall ³⁶⁶

Of Saragossa, mightiest in her fall;
The man nerved to a spirit, and the maid

Waving her more than Amazonian blade;
The knife of Arragon, Toledo's steel; ³⁷⁰

The famous lance of chivalrous Castile:
The unerring rifle of the Catalan;

The Andalusian courser in the van;
The torch to make a Moscow of Madrid;

And in each heart the spirit of the Cid:—
Such have been, such shall be, such are,
Advance, ³⁷⁶

And win—not Spain! but thine own free-
dom, France!

VIII

But lo! a Congress! What! that hallow'd
name

Which freed the Atlantic! May we hope
the same

THE AGE OF BRONZE

For outworn Europe? With the sound
arise, 380
Like Samuel's shade to Saul's monarchic
eyes,

The prophets of young Freedom, sum-
mon'd far

From climes of Washington and Bolivar;
Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the
seas; 385

And stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand
allay'd;

And Washington, the tyrant-tamer, wake,
To bid us blush for these old chains, or
break.

But *who* compose this senate of the few
That should redeem the many? *Who*
renew 391

This consecrated name, till now assign'd
To councils held to benefit mankind?

Who now assemble at the holy call?
The blest Alliance, which says three are
all! 395

An earthly trinity! which wears the shape
Of heaven's, as man is mimic'd by theape.

A pious unity! in purpose one—
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.

Why, Egypt's gods were rational to these;
Their dogs and oxen knew their own
degrees, 401

And, quiet in their kennel or their shed,
Cared little, so that they were duly fed;
But these, more hungry, must have some-
thing more—

The power to bark and bite, to toss and
gore. 405

Ah, how much happier were good Æsop's
frogs

Than we! for ours are animated logs,
With ponderous malice swaying to and fro,
And crushing nations with a stupid blow;
All duly anxious to leave little work 410
Unto the revolutionary stork.

IX

Thrice blest Verona! since the holy three
With their imperial presence shine on
thee!

Honour'd by them, thy treacherous site
forgets

The vaulted tomb of 'all the Capulets';
Thy Scaligers—for what was 'Dog the
Great,' 416

'Can Grande,' (which I venture to trans-
late,)

To these sublimer pugs? Thy poet too,
Catullus, whose old laurels yield to new;
Thine amphitheatre, where Romans sate;
And Dante's exile shelter'd by thy gate;
Thy good old man, whose world was all
within

Thy wall, nor knew the country held him in;

Would that the royal guests it girds about
Were so far like, as never to get out! 425

Ay, shout! inscribe! rear monuments of
shame,

To tell Oppression that the world is tame!
Crowd to the theatre with loyal rage,

The comedy is not upon the stage;
The show is rich in ribandry and stars,

Then gaze upon it through thy dungeon
bars; 431

Clap thy permitted palms, kind Italy,
For thus much still thy fetter'd hands are
free!

X

Resplendent sight! Behold the coxcomb
Czar,

The autocrat of waltzes and of war! 435
As eager for a plaudit as a realm,

And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
A Calmuck beauty with a Cossack wit,

And generous spirit, when 'tis not frost-
bit;

Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw, 440
But harden'd back when'er the morning's
raw;

With no objection to true liberty,
Except that it would make the nations
free.

How well the imperial dandy prates of
peace!

How fain, if Greeks would be his slaves,
free Greece! 445

How nobly gave he back the Poles their
Diet,

Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet!
How kindly would he send the mild

Ukraine,
With all her pleasant Pulks, to lecture

Spain!
How royally show off in proud Madrid

His goodly person, from the South long
hid! 451

A blessing cheaply purchased, the world
knows,

By having Muscovites for friends or foes.
Proceed, thou namesake of great Philip's

son!
La Harpe, thine Aristotle, beckons on;

And that which Scythia was to him of
yore 456

Find with thy Scythians on Iberia's shore.
Yet think upon, thou somewhat aged

youth,
Thy predecessor on the banks of Pruth;

Thou hast to aid thee, should his lot be
thine, 460

Many an old woman, but no Catherine.
Spain, too, hath rocks, and rivers, and

defiles—
The bear may rush into the lion's toils.

Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields;
Think'st thou to thee Napoleon's victor
yields? 465

THE AGE OF BRONZE

Better reclaim thy deserts, turn thy swords
To ploughshares, shave and wash thy
Bashkir hordes,
Redeem thy realms from slavery and the
knout,
Than follow headlong in the fatal route,
To infest the clime whose skies and laws
are pure 470
With thy fool legions. Spain wants no
manure:
Her soil is fertile, but she feeds no foe:
Hervultures, too, were gorged not long ago;
And wouldst thou furnish them with
fresher prey? 474
Alas! thou wilt not conquer, but purvey.
I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun
Stand between mine and many a myriad's
sun;
But were I not Diogenes, I'd wander
Rather a worm than *such* an Alexander!
Be slaves who will, the cynic shall be
free; 480
His tub hath tougher walls than Sinopè:
Still will he hold his lantern up to scan
The face of monarchs for an 'honest man.'

XI

And what doth Gaul, the all-prolific land
Of *ne plus ultra* ultras and their band
Of mercenaries? and her noisy chambers
And tribune, which each orator first
clammers
Before he finds a voice, and when 'tis
found,
Hears 'the lie' echo for his answer round?
Our British Commons sometimes deign to
'hear!' 490
A Gallic senate hath more tongue than ear;
Even Constant, their sole master of debate,
Must fight next day his speech to vindicate.
But this costs little to true Franks, who'd
rather 494
Combat than listen, were it to their father.
What is the simple standing of a shot,
To listening long, and interrupting not?
Though this was not the method of old
Rome,
When Tully fulminated o'er each vocal
dome,
Demosthenes has sanction'd the trans-
action, 500
In saying eloquence meant 'Action,
action!'

But where's the monarch? hath he dined?
or yet
Groans beneath indigestion's heavy debt?
Have revolutionary pâtés risen,
And turn'd the royal entrails to a prison?
Have discontented movements stirr'd the
troops? 506
Or have *no* movements follow'd traitorous
soups?

Have Carbonaro cooks not carbonadoed
Each course enough! or doctors dire dis-
suaded 509
Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks
I read all France's treason in her cooks!
Good classic Louis! is it, canst thou say,
Desirable to be the 'Desiré'?
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's
green abode,
Apician table, and Horatian ode, 515
To rule a people who will not be ruled,
And love much rather to be scourged than
school'd?
Ah! thine was not the temper or the taste
For thrones; the table sees thee better

A mild Epicurean, form'd, at best, 520
To be a kind host and as good a guest,
To talk of letters, and to know by heart
One *half* the poet's, *all* the gourmand's
art:
A scholar always, now and then a wit,
And gentle when digestion may permit;—
But not to govern lands enslaved or free;
The gout was martyrdom enough for thee.

XIII

Shall noble Albion pass without a phrase
From a bold Briton in her wonted praise?
'Arts, arms, and George, and glory, and
the isles, 530
And happy Britain, wealth, and Free-
dom's smiles,
White cliffs, that held invasion far aloof,
Contented subjects, all alike tax-proof,
Proud Wellington, with eagle beak so
curl'd,
That nose, the hook where he suspends
the world! 535
And Waterloo, and trade, and——(hush!
not yet
A syllable of imposts or of debt)——
And ne'er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,
Whose penknife slit a goose-quill t' other
day—
And "pilots who have weather'd every
storm"— 540
(But, no, not even for rhyme's sake, name
Reform).'
These are the themes thus sung so oft
before,
Methinks we need not sing them any more;
Found in so many volumes far and
near,
There's no occasion you should find them
here. 545
Yet something may remain perchance to
chime
With reason, and what's stranger still,
with rhyme.
Even this thy genius, Canning! may per-
mit,
Who, bred a statesman, still wast born a
wit,

THE AGE OF BRONZE

And never, even in that dull House,
couldst tame 550
To unheaven'd prose thine own poetic
flame;

Our last, our best, our only orator,
Even I can praise thee—Tories do no
more:

Nay, not so much;—they hate thee, man,
because

Thy spirit less upholds them than it awes.
The hounds will gather to their huntsman's
hollo, 556

And where he leads the duteous pack will
follow;

But not for love mistake their yelling cry;
Their yelp for game is not an eulogy;

Le 560

A dubious scent would lure the bipeds
back,

Thy saddle-girths are not yet quite secure,
Nor royal stallion's feet extremely sure;

The unwieldy old white horse is apt at last
To stumble, kick, and now and then stick
fast 565

With his great self and rider in the mud;
But what of that? the animal shows blood.

XIV

Alas, the country! how shall tongue or pen
Bewail her now *uncountry* gentlemen?

The last to bid the cry of warfare cease,
The first to make a malady of peace. 571

For what were all these country patriots
born?

To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of
corn?

But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,
Kings, conquerors, and markets most of
all. 575

And must ye fall with every ear of grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparté's
reign?

He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroy'd but realms, and still maintain'd 579

He amenable to every lord's content
The grand agrarian alchymy, high *rent*.

Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars,
And lower wheat to such desponding
quarters?

Why did you chain him on yon isle so lone?
The man was worth much more upon his
throne. 585

True, blood and treasure boundlessly were
spilt,

But what of that? the Gaul may bear the
guilt;

But bread was high, the farmer paid his
way,

And acres told upon the appointed day.
But where is now the goodly audit ale?

The purse-proud tenant, never known to
fail? 591

The farm which never yet was left on
hand?

The marsh reclaim'd to most improving
land?

The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental? What an evil's
peace! 595

In vain the prize excites the ploughman's
skill,

In vain the Commons pass their patriot
bill;

The *landed interest*—(you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the
land)—

The land self-interest groans from shore to
shore, 600

For fear that *land* should attain the sea,
Up, up again, ye rents! exalt your notes,

Or else the ministry will lose their votes,
And patriotism, so delicately nice,

Her loaves will lower to the market price;
For ah! 'the loaves and fishes,' once so
high, 606

Are gone—their oven closed, their ocean
dry,

And nought remains of all the millions
spent,

Excepting to grow moderate and content.
They who are not so, *had* their turn—and
turn 610

About still flows from Fortune's equal
urn;

Now let their virtue be its own reward,
And share the blessings which themselves
prepared.

See these inglorious Cincinnatti swarm,
Farmers of war, dictators of the farm;

Their ploughshare was the sword in hire-
ling hands, 616

Their fields manured by gore of other
lands;

Safe in their barns, these Sabian tillers sent
Their brethren out to battle—why? for
rent!

Year after year they voted cent. per cent.,
Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions—
why? for rent! 621

They roar'd, they dined, they drank, they
swore they meant

To die for England—why then live?—for
rent!

The peace has made one general malcon-
tent

Of these high-market patriots; war was
rent! 625

Their love of country, millions all mis-
spent,

How reconcile? by reconciling rent!
And will they not repay the treasures lent?

No: down with everything, and up with
rent!

Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or dis-
content, 630

Being, end, aim, religion—rent, rent, rent!

THE AGE OF BRONZE

Thou sold'st thy birthright, Esau! for a
 Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten
 less;
 Now thou hast swill'd thy pottage, thy
 demands
 Are idle; Israel says the bargain stands.
 Such, landlords! was your appetite for
 war, 636
 And gorged with blood, you grumble at a
 scar!
 What! would they spread their earthquake
 even o'er cash?
 And when land crumbles, bid firm paper
 crash?
 So rent may rise, bid bank and nation
 fall, 640
 And found on 'Change a *Funding Hos-*
pital?
 Lo, Mother Church, while all religion
 writhes,
 Like Niobe, weeps o'er her offspring,
 Tithes;
 The prelates go to—where the saints have
 gone, 644
 And proud pluralities subside to one;
 Church, state, and faction wrestle in the
 dark,
 Toss'd by the deluge in their common ark.
 Shorn of her bishops, banks, and divi-
 dends,
 Another Babel soars—but Britain ends.
 And why? to pamper the self-seeking
 wants, 650
 And prop the hill of these agrarian ants.
 'Go to these ants, thou sluggard, and be
 wise;'
 Admire their patience through each sacri-
 fice,
 Till taught to feel the lesson of their pride,
 The price of taxes and of homicide; 655
 Admire their justice, which would fain
 deny
 The debt of nations:—pray, *who made it*
high?

 Or turn to sail between those shifting
 rocks,
 The new Symplegades—the crushing
 Stocks,
 Where Midas might again his wish be-
 hold 660
 In real paper or imagined gold.
 That magic palace of Alcina shows
 More wealth than Britain ever had to lose,
 Were all her atoms of unleaven'd ore,
 And all her pebbles from Pactolus' shore.
 There Fortune plays, while Rumour holds
 the stake, 666
 And the world trembles to bid brokers
 break.
 How rich is Britain! not indeed in mines,
 Or peace or plenty, corn or oil, or wines;

No land of Canaan, full of milk and
 honey, 670
 Nor (save in paper shekels) ready money:
 But let us not to own the truth refuse,
 Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews?
 Those parted with their teeth to good
 King John,
 And now, ye kings! they kindly draw your
 own; 675
 All states, all things, all sovereigns they
 control,
 And waft a loan 'from Indus to the pole.'
 The banker, broker, baron, brethren,
 speed
 To aid these bankrupt tyrants in their need.
 Nor these alone; Columbia feels no less
 Fresh speculations follow each success;
 And philanthropic Israel deigns to drain
 Her mild per-centage from exhausted
 Spain.
 Not without Abraham's seed can Russia
 march;
 'Tis gold, not steel, that rears the con-
 queror's arch. 685
 Two Jews, a chosen people, can command
 In every realm their scripture-promised
 land:—
 Two Jews keep down the Romans, and up-
 hold
 The accursed Hun, more brutal than of
 old; 689
 Two Jews—but not Samaritans—direct
 The world, with all the spirit of their sect.
 What is the happiness of earth to them?
 A congress forms their 'New Jerusalem,'
 Where baronies and orders both invite—
 Oh, holy Abraham! dost thou see the
 sight? 695
 Thy followers mingling with these royal
 swine,
 Who spit not 'on their Jewish gaberdine,'
 But honour them as portion of the show—
 (Where now, oh Pope! is thy forsaken
 toe?
 Could it not favour Judah with some
 kicks? 700
 Or has it ceased to 'kick ag-
 pricks?')
 On Shylock's shore behold them stand
 afresh,
 To cut from nations' hearts their 'pound
 of flesh.'

XVI

Strange sight this Congress! destined to
 unite 704
 All that's incongruous, all that's opposite.
 I speak not of the sovereigns—they're
 alike,
 A common coin as ever mint could strike;
 But those who sway the puppets, pull the
 strings,
 Have more of motley than their heavy
 kings.

THE AGE OF BRONZE

Jews, authors, generals, charlatans, combine, 710

While Europe wonders at the vast design:
There Metternich, power's foremost parasite,

Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight;
There Chateaubriand forms new books of martyrs;

And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars; 715

There Montmorenci, the sworn foe to charters,

Turns a diplomatist of great éclat,
To furnish articles for the 'Débats;'

Of war so certain—yet not quite so sure
As his dismissal in the 'Moniteur.' 720

Alas! how could his cabinet thus err!
Can peace be worth an ultra-minister?

He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again,
'Almost as quickly as he conquer'd Spain.'

Enough of this—a sight more mournful
woos 725

The averted eye of the reluctant muse.
The imperial daughter, the imperial bride,

The imperial victim—sacrifice to pride;
The mother of the hero's hope, the boy,

The young Astyanax of modern Troy; 730
The still pale shadow of the loftiest queen

That earth has yet to see, or e'er hath seen;
She flits amidst the phantoms of the hour,

The theme of pity, and the wreck of power.
Oh, cruel mockery! Could not Austria

spare 735
A daughter? What did France's widow

there?

Her fitter place was by St. Helen's wave,
Her only throne is in Napoleon's grave.

But, no—she still must hold a petty reign,
Flank'd by her formidable chamberlain;

The martial Argus, whose not hundred
eyes 741

Must watch her through these paltry page-
antries.

What though she share no more, and
shared in vain,

A sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,
Which swept from Moscow to the south-

ern seas! 745
Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of

cheese,

Where Parma views the traveller resort,
To note the trappings of her mimic court.

But she appears! Verona sees her shorn
Of all her beams—while nations gaze and

mourn— 750
Ere yet her husband's ashes have had time

To chill in their inhospitable clime;
(If e'er those awful ashes can grow cold;—

But no,—their embers soon will burst the
mould;)

She comes!—the Andromache (but not
Racine's, 755

Nor Homer's,)—Lo! on Pyrrhus' arm she
leans!

Yes! the right arm, yet red from Water-
loo,

Which cut her lord's half-shatter'd sceptre
through,

Is offer'd and accepted? Could a slave
Do more? or less?—and *he* in his new

grave! 760
Her eye, her cheek, betray no inward

strife,
And the *ex*-empress grows as *ex* a wife!

So much for human ties in royal breasts!
Why spare men's feelings, when their own

are jests?

XVIII

But, tired of foreign follies, I turn home,
And sketch the group—the picture's yet

to come, 766
My muse 'gan weep, but, ere a tear was

spilt,
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!

While throng'd the chiefs of every High-
land clan

To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alder-
man! 770

Guildhall grows Gael, and echoes with
Erse roar,

While all the Common Council cry 'Clay-
more!'

To see proud Albyn's tartans as a belt
Gird the gross sirloin of a city Celt,

She burst into a laughter so extreme, 775
That I awoke—and lo! it was *no* dream!

Here, reader, will we pause:—if there's no
harm in

This first—you'll have, perhaps, a second
'Carmen.'

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

A ROMAUNT

L'UNIVERS est une espèce de livre, dont on n'a lu que la première page quand on n'a vu que son pays. J'en ai feuilleté un assez grand nombre, que j'ai trouvé également mauvais. Cet examen ne m'a point été infructueux. Je haïssais ma patrie. Toutes les impertinences des peuples divers, parmi lesquels j'ai vécu, m'ont réconcilié avec elle. Quand je n'aurais tiré d'autre bénéfice de mes voyages que celui-là, je n'en regretterais ni les frais ni les fatigues.—LE COSMOPOLITE.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND CANTOS

The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions. The scenes attempted to be sketched are in Spain, Portugal, Epirus, Acarnania, and Greece. There, for the present, the poem stops; its reception will determine whether the author may venture to conduct his readers to the capital of the East, through Ionia and Phrygia: these two cantos are merely experimental.

A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connexion to the piece; which, however, makes no pretension to regularity. It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinions I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, 'Childe Harold,' I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage. This I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim—Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated. In some very trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, I should hope, none whatever.

It is almost superfluous to mention that the appellation 'Childe,' as 'Childe Waters,' 'Childe Childers,' &c., is used as more consonant with the old structure of versification which I have adopted. The 'Good Night,' in the beginning of the first canto, was suggested by 'Lord Maxwell's Good Night,' in the *Border Minstrelsy*, edited by Mr. Scott.

With the different poems which have been published on Spanish subjects, there may be found some slight coincidence in the first part, which treats of the Peninsula, but it can only be casual; as, with the exception of a few concluding stanzas, the whole of this poem was written in the Levant.

The stanza of Spenser, according to one of our most successful poets, admits of every variety. Dr. Beattie makes the following observation:—"Not long ago, I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive of some great leader of an expedition, or the humorous strokes may be, if I mistake not, the measure of my opinion."

My opinion of such attempts, and of the following composition; satisfied that if they are unsuccessful, their failure must be in the execution, rather than in the design, sanctioned by the practice of Ariosto, Thomson, and Beattie.

LONDON, February, 1812.

ADDITION TO THE PREFACE

I HAVE now waited till almost all our periodical journals have distributed their usual portion of criticism. To the justice of the generality of their criticisms I have nothing to object: it would ill become me to quarrel with their very slight degree of censure, when, perhaps, if they had been less kind they had been more candid. Returning, therefore, to all and each my best thanks for their liberality, on one point alone shall I venture an observation. Amongst the many objections justly urged to the very indifferent character of the 'vagrant Childe' (whom, notwithstanding many hints to the contrary, I still maintain to be a fictitious personage), it has been stated, that, besides the anachronism, he is very *unknightly*, as the times of the Knights were times of Love, Honour, and so forth. Now, it so happens that the good old times, when 'l'amour du bon vieux temps, l'amour antique,' flourished, were the most profligate of all possible centuries. Those who have any doubts on this subject may consult Sainte-Palaye, *passim*, and more particularly vol. ii. p. 69. The vows of chivalry were no better kept than any other vows whatsoever; and the songs of the Troubadours were not more decent, and certainly were much less refined, than those of Ovid. The 'Cours d'amour, parlemens d'amour, ou de courtoisie et de gentillesse' had much more of love than of courtesy or gentleness. See Roland on the same subject with Sainte-Palaye. Whatever other objection may be urged to that most unamiable personage Childe Harold, he was so far perfectly knightly in his attributes—"No waiter, but a knight templar." By the by, I fear that Sir Tristrem and Sir Lancelot were no better than they should be, although very poetical personages and true knights 'sans peur,' though not 'sans reproche.' If the story of the institution of the 'Garter' be not a fable, the knights of that order have for several centuries borne the badge of a Countess of Salisbury, of indifferent memory. So much for chivalry. Burke need not have regretted that its days are over, though Marie-Antoinette was quite as chaste as most of those in whose honour lances were shivered, and knights unhorsed.

Before the days of Bayard, and down to those of Sir Joseph Banks (the most chaste and celebrated of ancient and modern times), few exceptions will be found to this statement; and I fear a little investigation will teach us not to regret these monstrous mummeries of the middle ages.

I now leave 'Childe Harold' to live his day, such as he is; it had been more agreeable, and certainly

* Beattie's Letters.

† The Rovers, or the Double Arrangement.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

more easy, to have drawn an amiable character. It had been easy to varnish over his faults, to make him do more and express less, but he never was intended as an example, further than to show, that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature and the stimulus of travel (except ambition, the most powerful of all excitements) are lost on a soul so constituted, or rather misdirected. Had I proceeded with the poem, this character would have deepened as he drew to the close; for the outline which I once meant to fill up for him was, with some exceptions, the sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco.

LONDON, 1813.

TO IANTHE

Not in those climes where I have late
been straying,
Though Beauty long hath there been
matchless deem'd;
Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs but to have only
dream'd,
Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy
seem'd:
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek
To paint those charms which varied as
they beam'd—
To such as see thee not my words were
weak;
To those who gaze on thee what language
could they speak?

Ah! may'st thou ever be what now thou
art,
Nor unbeseem the promise of thy spring,
As fair in form, as warm yet pure in
heart,
Love's image upon earth without his
wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!
And surely she who now so fondly rears
Thy youth, in thee, thus hourly bright-
ening,
Beholds the rainbow of her future years,
Before whose heavenly hues all sorrow
disappears.

Young Peri of the West!—'tis well for me
My years already doubly number thine;
My loveless eye unmoved may gaze on
thee,
And safely view thy ripening beauties
shine;

Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline;
Happier, that while all younger hearts
shall bleed,
Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes
assign
To those whose admiration shall succeed,
But mix'd with pangs to Love's even love-
liest hours decreed.

Oh! let that eye, which, wild as the
Gazelle's,
Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,
Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it
dwells,
Glance o'er this page, nor to my verse
deny
That smile for which my breast might
vainly sigh
Could I to thee be ever more than friend:
This much, dear maid, accord; nor
question why
To one so young my strain I would
commend,
But bid me with my wreath one matchless
lily blend.

Such is thy name with this my verse
entwined;
And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast
On Harold's page, Ianthé's here en-
shrined
Shall thus be first beheld, forgotten last:
My days once number'd, should this
homage past
Attract thy fairy fingers near the lyre
Of him who hail'd thee, loveliest as
thou wast,
Such is the most my memory may de-
sire;
Though more than Hope can claim, could
Friendship less require?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CANTO THE FIRST

I

Oh, thou! in Hellas deem'd of heavenly
birth,
Muse! form'd or fabled at the minstrel's
will!
Since shamed full oft by later lyres on
earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred
hill:

Yet there I've wander'd by thy vaunted
rill;
Yes! sigh'd o'er Delphi's long deserted
shrine,
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is
still;
Nor mote my shell awake the weary
Nine
To grace so plain a tale—this lowly lay of
mine.

CANTO I]

II

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
 Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
 But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
 And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
 Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
 Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
 Few earthly things found favour in his sight
 Save concubines and carnal companie,
 And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

III

Childe Harold was he hight:—but whence his name
 And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
 Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
 And had been glorious in another day:
 But one sad losel soils a name for aye,
 However mighty in the olden time;
 Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay,
 Nor florid prose, nor honeyed lies of rhyme,
 Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

IV

Childe Harold bask'd him in the noon-tide sun,
 Disporting there like any other fly;
 Nor deem'd before his little day was done
 One blast might chill him into misery.
 But long ere scarce a third of his pass'd by,
 Worse than adversity the Childe befell;
 He felt the fulness of satiety:
 Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
 Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremit's sad cell.

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
 Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
 Had sigh'd to many though he loved but one,
 And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.
 Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
 Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
 Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste,
 Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste.

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
 And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
 'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
 But Pride congeal'd the drop within his eye:
 Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,
 And from his native land resolved to go,
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
 With pleasure drugg'd, he almost long'd for woe,
 And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

VII

The Childe departed from his father's hall:
 It was a vast and venerable pile;
 So old, it seem'd only not to fall,
 Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
 Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!
 Where Superstition once had made her den
 Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
 And monks might deem their time was come agen,
 If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

VIII

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood
 Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow
 As if the memory of some deadly feud
 Or disappointed passion lurk'd below:
 But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
 For his was not that open, artless soul
 That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow,
 Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
 Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

IX

And none did love him: though to hall and bower
 He gather'd revellers from far and near,
 He knew them flatt'ers of the festal hour;
 The heartless parasites of present cheer.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

Yea! none did love him—not his lemans
dear—
But pomp and power alone are woman's
care,
And where these are light Eros finds a
feere;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by
glare,
And Mammon wins his way where
Seraphs might despair.

X

Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he
did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage begun:
If friends he had, he bade adieu to
none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast
of steel:
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote
upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly
hope to heal.

XI

His house, his home, his heritage, his
lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did
delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and
snowy hands,
Might shake the saintship of an an-
chorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite;
His goblets brimm'd with every costly
wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left, to cross the
brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass
Earth's central line.

The sails were fill'd, and fair the light
winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native
home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his
view,
And soon were lost in circumambient
foam:
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did
come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and
wept,
And to the reckless gales unmanly moan-
ing kept.

XIII

But when the sun was sinking in the sea
He seized his harp, which he at times
could string,
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deem'd he no strange ear was
listening:
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tuned his farewell in the dim
twilight.
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,
And fleeing shores receded from his
sight,
Thus to the elements he pour'd his last
'Good Night.'

1

ADIEU, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land—Good Night!

A few short hours and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall;
My dog howls at the gate.

'Come hither, hither, my little page!
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billows' rage,
Or tremble at the gale?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye;
Our ship is swift and strong:
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.'

4

'Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind:
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friend, save these alone,
But thee—and one above.

5

'My father bless'd me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.'—
'Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry.

CANTO I]

6

'Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman?
Or shiver at the gale?'—
'Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I'm not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

7

'My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake,
And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make?'—
'Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.'

8

For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feeres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o'er.
For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

9

And now I'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea:
But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands.

10

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts and ye caves!
My native Land—Good Night!

xiv

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless
bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth,
anon,
New shores descried make every bosom
gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on
their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And soon on board the Lusian pilots
leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet
few rustics reap.

xv

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this de-
licious land:
What fruits of fragrance blush on every
tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills
expand!
But man would mar them with an im-
pious hand:
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest
scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his
high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot
shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest
foemen purge.

xvi

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of
gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did
ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was
allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford:
A nation swoln with ignorance and
pride,
Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves
the sword
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's
unsparing lord.

xvii

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
'Mid many things unsightly to strange
ee;
For hut and palace show like filthily:
The dingy denizens are rear'd in dirt;
Ne personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout or
shirt;
Though shent with Egypt's plague, un-
kempt, unwash'd, unhurt.

xviii

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born 'midst
noblest;
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on
such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.

Ah me! what hand can pencil guide, or

To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto
mortal ken

Than those whereof such things the bard
relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlock'd
Elysium's gates?

XIX

The horrid crags, by toppling convent
crown'd,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the
shaggy steep,
The mountain-moss by scorching skies
imbrown'd,
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs
must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest
bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch
below,
Mix'd in one mighty scene, with varied
beauty glow.

Then slowly climb the many-winding
way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's house of
woe';
Where frugal monks their little relics
show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punish'd been,
and lo!
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did
dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth
a Hell.

XXI

And here and there, as up the crags you
spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near
the path:
Yet deem not these devotion's offer-
ing—
These are memorials frail of murderous
wrath:
For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim
bath
Pour'd forth his blood beneath the
assassin's knife,
Some hand erects a cross of mouldering
lath;
And grove and glen with thousand such
are rife
Throughout this purple land, where law
secures not life.

XXII

On sloping mounds, or in the vale be-
neath,
Are domes where whilome kings did
make repair;
But now the wild flowers round them
only breathe;
Yet ruin'd splendour still is lingering
there.
And yonder towers the Prince's palace
fair:
There thou too, Vathek! England's
wealthiest son,
Once form'd thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton Wealth her mightiest
deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever
wont to shun.

XXIII

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of
pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous
brow:
But now, as if a thing unblest by
Man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide:
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom,
how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth sup-
plied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's un-
gentle tide!

XXIV

Behold the hall where chiefs were late
convened!
Oh! dome displeasing unto British
eye!
With diadem hight foolscap, lo! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe array'd,
and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazon'd glare names known to
chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
Whereat the Urchin points and laughs
with all his soul.

XXV

Convention is the dwarfish demon
styled
That foil'd the knights in Marialva's
dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them
beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to
gloom.
Here Folly dash'd to earth the victor's
plume,

CANTO I]

And Policy regain'd what arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels
bloom!

Woe to the conqu'ring, not the con-
quer'd host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast!

XXVI

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra! at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they
could, for shame.

How will posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of
their fame,

By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors
here,
Where Scorn her finger points through
many a coming year?

XXVII

So deem'd the Childe, as o'er the moun-
tains he

Did take his way in solitary guise:
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought
to flee,

More restless than the swallow in the
skies:

Though here awhile he learn'd to mora-
lize,

For Meditation fix'd at times on him;
And conscious Reason whisper'd, to
despise

His early youth, misspent in maddest
whim;

But as he gazed on truth his aching eyes
grew dim.

XXVIII

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever
quits

A scene of peace, though soothing to
his soul:

Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the
bowl.

Onward he flies, nor fix'd as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrim-
age;

And o'er him many changing scenes
must roll

Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn ex-
perience sage.

XXIX

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luck-
less queen;

And church and court did mingle their
array,

And mass and revel were alternate seen;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Lordlings and freres—ill-sorted fry I
ween!

But here the Babylonian whore hath
built

A dome, where flaunts she in such
glorious sheen,

That men forget the blood which she
hath spilt,

And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to
varnish guilt.

XXX

O'er vales that teem with fruits, roman-
tic hills,

(Oh, that such hills upheld a free-born
race!)

Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce
fills,

Childe Harold wends through many a
pleasant place.

Though sluggards deem it but a foolish
chase,

And marvel men should quit their easy
chair,

The toilsome way, and long, long
league to trace,

Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain
air,

And life, that bloated Ease can never hope
to share.

XXXI

More bleak to view the hills at length
recede,

And, less luxuriant, smoother vales ex-
tend;

Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,

Spain's realms appear whereon her
shepherds tend

Flocks, whose rich fleece right well the
trader knows—

Now must the pastor's arm his lambs
defend:

For Spain is compass'd by unyielding
foes,

And all must shield their all, or share Sub-
jection's woes.

XXXII

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,
Deem ye what bounds the rival realms
divide?

Or ere the jealous queens of nations
greet,

Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark Sierras rise in craggy pride?

Or fence of art, like China's vasty
wall?—

Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark
and tall,

Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's
land from Gaul:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

XXXIII

But these between a silver streamlet
And scarce a name distinguisheth the
brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant
sides.
Here leans the idle shepherd on his
crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth
look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foe-
men flow;
For proud each peasant as the noblest
duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the differ-
ence know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of
the low.

XXXIV

But ere the mingling bounds have far
been pass'd,
Dark Guadiana rolls his power along
In sullen billows, murmuring and vast,
So noted ancient roundelays among.
Whilome upon his banks did legions
throng
Of Moor and Knight, in mail'd splen-
dour drest:
Here ceased the swift their race, here
sunk the strong;
The Paynim turban and the Christian crest
Mix'd on the bleeding stream, by floating
hosts oppress'd.

XXXV

Oh, lovely Spain! renown'd, romantic
land!
Where is that standard which Pelagio
bore,
When Cava's traitor-sire first call'd the
band
That dyed thy mountain streams with
Gothic gore?
Where are those bloody banners which
of yore
Waved o'er thy sons, victorious to the
gale,
And drove at last the spoilers to their
shore?
Red gleam'd the cross, and waned the
crescent pale,
While Afric's echoes thrill'd with Moorish
matrons' wail.

XXXVI

Teems not each ditty with the glorious
tale?

Ah! such, alas! the hero's amplest fate!
When granite moulders and when
records fail,

A peasant's plaint prolongs his dubious
date.

Pride! bend thine eye from heaven to
thine estate,
See how the Mighty shrink into a song!
Can Volume, Pillar, Pile preserve thee
great?

Or must thou trust tradition's simple
tongue,
When Flattery sleeps with thee, and His-
tory does thee wrong?

XXXVII

Awake, ye sons of Spain! awake! ad-
vance!

Lo! Chivalry, your ancient goddess,
cries,
But wiolds not, as of old, her thirstylance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the
skies:

Now on the smoke of blazing bolts she
flies,

And speaks in thunder through yon en-
gine's roar:

In every peal she calls—'Awake! arise!'
Say, is her voice more feeble than of
yore,

When her war-song was heard on Anda-
lusia's shore?

XXXVIII

Hark! heard you not those hoofs of
dreadful note?

Sounds not the clang of conflict on the
heath?

Saw ye not whom the reeking sabre
smote,

Nor saved your brethren ere they sank
beneath

Tyrants and tyrants' slaves? the fires of
death,

The bale-fires flash on high:—from rock
to rock

Each volley tells that thousands cease
to breathe;

Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red Battle stamps his foot, and nations
feel the shock.

XXXIX

Lo! where the Giant on the mountain
stands,

His blood-red tresses deep'ning in the
sun,

With death-shot glowing in his fiery
hands,

And eye that scorcheth all it glares
upon;

Restless it rolls, now fix'd, and now anon
Flashing afar,—and at his iron feet

Destruction cowers, to mark what deeds
are done;

For on this morn three potent nations
meet,

To shed before his shrine the blood he
deems most sweet.

XL

By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
 (For one who hath no friend, no brother
 there)
 Their rival scarfs of mix'd embroidery,
 Their various arms that glitter in the air!
 What gallant war-hounds rouse them
 from their lair,
 And gnash their fangs, loud yelling for
 the prey!
 All join the chase, but few the triumph
 share;
 The Grave shall bear the chiefest prize
 away,
 And Havoc scarce for joy can number
 their array.

XLI

Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
 Three tongues prefer strange orisons
 on high;
 Three gaudy standards flout the pale
 blue skies;
 The shouts are France, Spain, Albion,
 Victory!
 The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
 That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
 Are met—as if at home they could not
 die—
 To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
 And fertilize the field that each pretends
 to gain.

XLII

There shall they rot—Ambition's hon-
 our'd fools!
 Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps
 their clay!
 Vain Sophistry! in these behold the
 tools,
 The broken tools, that tyrants cast away
 By myriads, when they dare to pave their
 way
 With human hearts—to what?—a
 dream alone.
 Can despots compass aught that hails
 their sway?
 Or call with truth one span of earth their
 own,
 Save that wherein at last they crumble
 bone by bone?

XLIII

Oh, Albuera! glorious field of grief!
 As o'er thy plain the Pilgrim prick'd his
 steed,
 Who could foresee thee, in a space so
 brief,
 A scene where mingling foes should
 boast and bleed!
 Peace to the perish'd! may the warrior's
 meed
 And tears of triumph their reward pro-
 long!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Till others fall where other chieftains
 lead
 Thy name shall circle round the gaping
 throng,
 And shine in worthless lays the theme of
 transient song.

Enough of battle's minions! let them
 play
 Their game of lives, and barter breath
 for fame:
 Fame that will scarce reanimate their
 clay,
 Though thousands fall to deck some
 single name.
 In sooth 'twere sad to thwart their noble
 aim
 Who strike, blest hirelings! for their
 country's good,
 And die, that living might have proved
 her shame;
 Perish'd, perchance, in some domestic
 feud,
 Or in a narrower sphere wild Rapine's
 path pursued.

XLV

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely
 way
 Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsub-
 dued:
 Yet is she free—the spoiler's wish'd-for
 prey!
 Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot
 intrude,
 Blackening her lovely domes with traces
 rude.
 Inevitable hour! 'Gainst fate to strive
 Where Desolation plants her famish'd
 brood
 Is vain, or Ilion, Tyre, might yet sur-
 vive,
 And Virtue vanquish all, and murder
 cease to thrive.

XLVI

But all unconscious of the coming
 doom,
 The feast, the song, the revel here a-
 bounds;
 Strange modes of merriment the hours
 consume,
 Nor bleed these patriots with their
 country's wounds;
 Nor here War's clarion, but Love's re-
 beck sounds;
 Here Folly still his votaries inthralls;
 And young-eyed Lewdness walks her
 midnight rounds;
 Girt with the silent crimes of Capitals,
 Still to the last kind Vice clings to the
 tott'ring walls.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

XLVII

Not so the rustic—with his trembling
mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of war.
No more beneath soft Eve's consenting
star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, monarchs! could ye taste the mirth
ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and
Man be happy yet!

XLVIII

How carols now the lusty muleteer?
Of love, romance, devotion is his lay,
As whilome he was wont the leagues to
cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the
way?
No! as he speeds, he chants 'Vivā el
Rey!'
And checks his song to execrate Godoy,
The royal wittol Charles, and curse the
day
When first Spain's queen beheld the
black-eyed boy,
And gore-faced Treason sprung from her
adulterate joy.

XLIX

On yon long, level plain, at distance
crown'd
With crags, whereon those Moorish
turrets rest,
Wide scatter'd hoof-marks dint the
wounded ground;
And, scathed by fire, the greensward's
darken'd vest
Tells that the foe was Andalusia's guest:
Here was the camp, the watch-flame,
and the host,
Here the bold peasant storm'd the
dragon's nest;
Still does he mark it with triumphant
boast;
And points to yonder cliffs, which oft
were won and lost.

And whomsoe'er along the path you
meet
Bears in his cap the badge of crimson
hue,
Which tells you whom to shun and
whom to greet.
Woe to the man that walks in public
view
Without of loyalty this token true:
Sharp is the knife, and sudden is the
stroke;

And sorely would the Gallic foeman rue,
If subtle poniards, wrapt beneath the
cloke,
Could blunt the sabre's edge, or clear the
cannon's smoke.

LI

At every turn Morena's dusky height
Sustains aloft the battery's iron load;
And, far as mortal eye can compass
sight,
The mountain-howitzer, the broken
road,
The bristling palisade, the fosse o'er-
flow'd,
The station'd bands, the never-vacant
watch,
The magazine in rocky durance stow'd,
The holster'd steed beneath the shed of
thatch,
The ball-piled pyramid, the ever-blazing
match,

LII

Portend the deeds to come:—but he
whose nod
Has tumbled feebler despots from their
sway,
A moment pauseth ere he lifts the rod;
A little moment deigneth to delay:
Soon will his legions sweep through
these their way;
The West must own the Scourger of the
world.
Ah! Spain! how sad will be thy reckon-
ing day,
When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his
wings unfurl'd,
And thou shalt view thy sons in crowds to
Hades hurl'd.

LIII

And must they fall? the young, the
proud, the brave,
To swell one bloated Chief's unwhole-
some reign?
No step between submission and a grave?
The rise of rapine and the fall of Spain?
And doth the Power that man adores
ordain
Their doom, nor heed the suppliant's
appeal?
Is all that desperate Valour acts in vain?
And Counsel sage, and patriotic Zeal,
The Veteran's skill, Youth's fire, and
Manhood's heart of steel?

LIV

Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused,
Hangs on the willow her unstrung guitar,
And, all unsex'd, the Anlace hath
espoused,
Sung the loud song, and dared the deed
of war?

CANTO I]

And she, whom once the semblance of a
 scar
 Appall'd, an owl's 'larum chill'd with
 Now views the column-scattering bay'-
 net jar,
 The falchion flash, and o'er the yet warm
 dead
 Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars
 might quake to tread.

LV

Ye who shall marvel when you hear her
 tale,
 Oh! had you known her in her softer
 hour,
 Mark'd her black eye that mocks her
 coal-black veil,
 Heard her light, lively tones in Lady's
 bower,
 Seen her long locks that foil the pain-
 ter's power,
 Her fairy form, with more than female
 grace,
 Scarce would you deem that Saragoza's
 tower
 Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon
 face,
 Thine the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's
 fearful chase.

LVI

Her lover sinks—she sheds no ill-timed
 tear;
 Her chief is slain—she fills his fatal post;
 Her fellows flee—she checks their base
 career;
 The foe retires—she heads the sallying
 host:
 Who can appease like her a lover's
 ghost?
 Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
 What maid retrieve when man's flush'd
 hope is lost?
 Who hang so fiercely on the flying
 Gaul,
 Foil'd by a woman's hand, before a bat-
 ter'd wall?

LVII

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Ama-
 zons,
 But form'd for all the witching arts of
 love:
 Though thus in arms they emulate her
 sons,
 And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
 'Tis but the tender fierceness of the dove,
 Pecking the hand that hovers o'er her
 mate:
 In softness as in firmness far above
 Remoter females, famed for sickening
 prate;
 Her mind is nobler sure, her charms per-
 chance as great.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The seal Love's dimpling finger hath
 impress'd
 Denotes how soft that chin which bears
 his touch:
 Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave
 their nest,
 Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
 Her glance how wildly beautiful! how
 much
 Hath Phœbus woo'd in vain to spoil
 her cheek,
 Which glows yet smoother from his
 amorous clutch!
 Who round the North for paler dames
 would seek?
 How poor their forms appear! how lan-
 guid, wan, and weak!

Match me, ye climes! which poets love
 to laud;
 Match me, ye harems of the land! where
 now
 I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
 Beauties that ev'n a cynic must avow;
 Match me those Houries, whom ye
 scarce allow
 To taste the gale lest Love should ride
 the wind,
 With Spain's dark-glancing daugh-
 ters—deign to know,
 There your wise Prophet's paradise we
 find,
 His black-eyed maids of Heaven, an-
 gelically kind.

LX

Oh, thou Parnassus! whom I now sur-
 vey,
 Not in the phrensy of a dreamer's eye,
 Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
 But soaring snow-clad through thy
 native sky,
 In the wild pomp of mountain majesty!
 What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
 The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
 Would gladly woo thine Echoes with
 his string,
 Though from thy heights no more one
 Muse will wave her wing.

LXI

Oft have I dream'd of Thee! whose
 glorious name
 Who knows not, knows not man's di-
 vinest lore:
 And now I view thee, 'tis, alas! with
 shame
 That I in feeblest accents must adore.
 When I recount thy worshippers of yore

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to
soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on Thee!

LXII

Happier in this than mightiest bards
have been,
Whose fate to distant homes confined
their lot,
Shall I unmoved behold the hallow'd
scene,
Which others rave of, though they know
it not?
Though here no more Apollo haunts his
grot,
And thou, the Muses' seat, art now their
grave,
Some gentle spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melo-
dious wave.

LXIII

Of thee hereafter.—Ev'n amidst my
strain
I turn'd aside to pay my homage here;
Forgot the land, the sons, the maids of
Spain;
Her fate, to every freeborn bosom dear;
And hail'd thee, not perchance without
a tear.
Now to my theme—but from thy holy
haunt
Let me some remnant, some memorial
bear;
Yield me one leaf of Daphne's deathless
plant,
Nor let thy votary's hope be deem'd an
idle vaunt.

LXIV

But ne'er didst thou, fair Mount, when
Greece was young,
See round thy giant base a brighter choir,
Nor e'er did Delphi, when her priestess
sung
The Pythian hymn with more than mortal
fire,
Behold a train more fitting to inspire
The song of love, than Andalusia's
maids,
Nurst in the glowing lap of soft desire:
Ah! that to these were given such peace-
ful shades
As Greece can still bestow, though Glory
fly her glades.

LXV

Fair is proud Seville; let her country
boast
Her strength, her wealth, her site of
ancient days;

But Cadiz, rising on the distant coast,
Calls forth a sweeter, though ignoble
praise.
Ah, Vice! how soft are thy voluptuous
ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who
can 'scape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?
A Cherub-hydra round us dost thou
gape,
And mould to every taste thy dear delusive
shape.

LXVI

When Paphos fell by Time—accursed
Time!
The Queen who conquers all must yield
to thee—
The Pleasures fled, but sought as warm
a clime;
And Venus, constant to her native sea,
To nought else constant, hither deign'd
to flee,
And fix'd her shrine within these walls
of white;
Though not to one dome circumscribeth
she
Her worship, but, devoted to her rite,
A thousand altars rise, for ever blazing
bright.

LXVII

From morn till night, from night till
startled Morn
Peeps blushing on the revel's laughing
crew,
The song is heard, the rosy garland
worn;
Devices quaint, and frolics ever new,
Tread on each other's kibes. A long
adieu
He bids to sober joy that here sojourns:
Nought interrupts the riot, though in
lieu
Of true devotion monkish incense
burns,
And love and prayer unite, or rule the hour
by turns.

LXVIII

The Sabbath comes, a day of blessed
rest:
What hallows it upon this Christian
shore?
Lo! it is sacred to a solemn feast:
Hark! heard you not the forest-mon-
arch's roar?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spout-
ing gore
Of man and steed, o'erthrown beneath
his horn;
The throng'd arena shakes with shouts
for more;

CANTO I]

Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly
torn,
Nor shrinks the female eye, nor ev'n affects
to mourn.

LXIX

The seventh day this; the jubilee of man.
London! right well thou know'st the
day of prayer:
Then thy spruce citizen, wash'd artisan,
And smug apprentice gulp their weekly
air:
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one-
horse chair,
And humblest gig through sundry sub-
urbs whirl;
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow
make repair;
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to
hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedes-
trian churl.

Some o'er thy Thamis row the ribbon'd
fair,
Others along the safer turnpike fly;
Some Richmond-hill ascend, some scud
to Ware,
And many to the steep of Highgate hie.
Ask ye, Bœotian shades! the reason
why?
'Tis to the worship of the solemn Horn,
Grasp'd in the holy hand of Mystery,
In whose dread name both men and
maids are sworn,
And consecrate the oath with draught, and
dance till morn.

LXXI

All have their fooleries—not alike are
thine,
Fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea!
Soon as the matin bell proclaimeth nine,
Thy Saint-adors count the rosary:
Much is the VIRGIN teased to shrive
them free
(Well do I ween the only virgin there)
From crimes as numerous as her beads-
men be;
Then to the crowded circus forth they
fare:
Young, old, high, low, at once the same
diversion share.

LXXII

The lists are oped, the spacious area
clear'd,
Thousands on thousands piled are
seated round;
Long ere the first loud trumpet's note is
heard,
No vacant space for lated wight is
found:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Here dons, grantees, but chiefly dames
abound,
Skill'd in the ogle of a roguish eye,
Yet ever well inclined to heal the wound;
None through their cold disdain are
doom'd to die,
As moon-struck bards complain, by
Love's sad archery.

LXXIII

Hush'd is the din of tongues—on gallant
steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and
light-poised lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous
deeds,
And lowly bending to the lists advance;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers
feately prance:
If in the dangerous game they shine to-
day,
The crowd's loud shout and ladies' lovely
glance,
Best prize of better acts, they bear
away,
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their
toils repay.

LXXIV

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak array'd,
But all afoot, the light-limb'd Matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
The lord of lowing herds; but not be-
fore
The ground, with cautious tread, is tra-
versed o'er,
Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart
his speed:
His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor
more
Can man achieve without the friendly
steed—
Alas! too oft condemn'd for him to bear
and bleed.

LXXV

Thrice sounds the clarion; lo! the signal
falls,
The den expands, and Expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled
walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the
mighty brute,
And, wildly staring, spurns, with sound-
ing foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his
foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening
front, to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated
glow.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

LXXVI

Sudden he stops; his eye is fix'd: away,
Away, thou heedless boy! prepare the
spear:
Now is thy time to perish, or display
The skill that ye may check his mad
career.
With well-timed croupe the nimble
coursers veer;
On foams the bull, but not unscathed
he goes;
Streams from his flank the crimson tor-
rent clear:
He flies, he wheels, distracted with his
throes;
Dart follows dart; lance, lance; loud
bellowings speak his woes.

LXXVII

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance
avail,
Nor the wild plunging of the tortured
horse;
Though man and man's avenging arms
assail,
Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.
One gallant steed is stretch'd a mangled
corse;
Another, hideous sight! unseam'd ap-
pears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting
source;
Though death-struck, still his feeble
frame he rears;
Staggering, but stemming all, his lord un-
harm'd he bears.

LXXVIII

Foll'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to
the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and
lances brast,
And foes disabled in the brutal fray;
And now the Matadores around him
play,
Shake the red cloak and poise the ready
brand:
Once more through all he bursts his
thundering way—
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge
hand,
Wraps his fierce eye—'tis past—he sinks
upon the sand!

LXXIX

Where his vast neck just mingles with
the spine,
Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon
lies.
He stops—he starts—disdaining to de-
cline:
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,

Without a groan, without a struggle
dies.

The decorated car appears—on high
The corse is piled—sweet sight for vul-
gar eyes—
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift
as shy,
Hurl the dark bulk along, scarce seen in
dashing by.

LXXX

Such the ungente sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Span-
ish swain.
Nurtured in blood betimes, his heart
delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's
pain.
What private feuds the troubled village
stain!
Though now one phalanx'd host should
meet the foe,
Enough, alas! in humble homes remain,
To meditate 'gainst friends the secret
blow,
For some slight cause of wrath whence
life's warm stream must flow.

LXXXI

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His wither'd centinel, Duenna sage!
And all whereat the generous soul re-
volts,
Which the stern dotard deem'd he could
encage,
Have pass'd to darkness with the van-
ish'd age.
Who late so free as Spanish girls were
seen
(Ere War uprose in his volcanic rage),
With braided tresses bounding o'er the
green,
While on the gay dance shone Night's
lover-loving Queen?

LXXXII

Oh! many a time and oft, had Harold
loved,
Or dream'd he loved, since rapture is a
dream;
But now his wayward bosom was un-
moved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's
stream;
And lately had he learn'd with truth to
deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er
he seem,
Full from the fount of Joy's delicious
springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling
venom flings.

LXXXIII

Yet to the beauteous form he was not
blind,
Though now it moved him as it moves
the wise:
Not that Philosophy on such a mind
E'er deign'd to bend her chastely-awful
eyes:
But Passion raves itself to rest, or flies;
And Vice, that digs her own voluptuous
tomb,
Had buried long his hopes, no more to
rise:
Pleasure's pall'd victim! life-aborring
gloom
Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's un-
resting doom.

LXXXIV

Still he beheld, nor mingled with the
throng;
But view'd them not with misanthropic
hate:
Fain would he now have join'd the
dance, the song;
But who may smile that sinks beneath
his fate:
Nought that he saw his sadness could
abate:
Yet once he struggled 'gainst the de-
mon's sway,
And as in Beauty's bower he pensive
sate,
Pour'd forth this unpremeditated lay,
To charms as fair as those that soothed
his happier day.

TO INEZ

1

NAY, smile not at my sullen brow;
Alas! I cannot smile again:
Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

2

And dost thou ask what secret woe
I bear, corroding joy and youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
A pang, ev'n thou must fail to soothe?

3

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:

4

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:
To me no pleasure Beauty brings;
Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me.

5

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore;
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for rest before.

6

What Exile from himself can flee?
To zones though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life—the demon Thought.

7

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
And taste of all that I forsake;
Oh! may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er, at least like me, awake!

8

Through many a clime 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.

9

What is the worst? Nay, do not ask—
In pity from the search forbear;
Smile on—nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the Hell that's
there.

LXXXV

Adieu, fair Cadiz! yea, a long adieu!
Who may forget how well thy walls have
stood?
When all were changing, thou alone
wert true,
First to be free, and last to be subdued:
And if amidst a scene, a shock so rude,
Some native blood was seen thy streets
to dye
A traitor only fell beneath the feud:
Here all were noble, save Nobility!
None hugg'd a conqueror's chain, save
fallen Chivalry!

LXXXVI

Such be the sons of Spain, and strange
her fate!
They fight for freedom who were never
free,
A Kingless people for a nerveless state;
Her vassals combat when their chief-
tains flee,
True to the veriest slaves of Treachery:
Fond of a land which gave them nought
but life,
Pride points the path that leads to
Liberty;
Back to the struggle, baffled in the strife,
War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the
knife!'

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO I

LXXXVII

Ye, who would more of Spain and Span-
ards know,
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest
strife:
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on
foreign foe
Can act, is acting there against man's
life:
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,
War mouldeth there each weapon to his
need—
So may he guard the sister and the wife,
So may he make each curst oppressor
bleed—
So may such foes deserve the most re-
morseless deed!

LXXXVIII

Flows there a tear of pity for the dead?
Look o'er the ravage of the reeking
plain;
Look on the hands with female slaughter
red;
Then to the dogs resign the unburied
slain,
Then to the vulture let each corse re-
main,
Albeit unworthy of the prey-bird's
maw;
Let their bleach'd bones, and blood's
unbleaching stain,
Long mark the battle-field with hideous
awe:
Thus only may our sons conceive the
scenes we saw!

LXXXIX

Nor yet, alas! the dreadful work is done;
Fresh legions pour adown the Pyrenees:
It deepens still, the work is scarce begun,
Nor mortal eye the distant end foresees.
Fall'n nations gaze on Spain; if freed,
she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once en-
chain'd:
Strange retribution! now Columbia's

Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons
sustain'd,
While o'er the parent clime prowls Mur-
der unrestrain'd.

XC

Not all the blood at Talavera shed,
Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight,
Not Albuera lavish of the dead,
Have won for Spain her well-asserted
right.
When shall her Olive-Branch be free
from blight?
When shall she breathe her from the
blushing toil?

How many a doubtful day shall sink in
night,
Ere the Frank robber turn him from his
spoil,
And Freedom's stranger-tree grow nati'
of the soil!

XCI

And thou, my friend!—since unavail-
ing woe
Bursts from my heart, and mingles with
the strain—
Had the sword laid thee with the mighty
low,
Pride might forbid e'en Friendship to
complain:
But thus unlaurel'd to descend in vain,
By all forgotten, save the lonely breast,
And mix unbleeding with the boasted
slain,
While Glory crowns so many a meaner
crest!
What hadst thou done to sink so peacefully
to rest?

XCI

Oh, known the earliest, and esteem'd the
most!
Dear to a heart where nought was left so
dear!
Though to my hopeless days for ever
lost,
In dreams deny me not to see thee here!
And Morn in secret shall renew the
tear
Of Consciousness awaking to her
woes,
And Fancy hover o'er thy bloodless
bier,
Till my frail frame return to whence it
rose,
And mourn'd and mourner lie united in
repose.

XCIII

Here is one fyte of Harold's pilgrim-
age:
Ye who of him may further seek to
know,
Shall find some tidings in a future
If he that rhymeth now may scribble
moe.
Is this too much? stern Critic! say not
so:
Patience! and ye shall hear what he be-
held
In other lands, where he was doom'd to
go:
Lands that contain the monuments of
Eld,
Ere Greece and Grecian arts by barbarous
hands were quell'd.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

COME, blue-eyed maid of heaven!—but
 thou, alas!
 Didst never yet one mortal song in-
 spire—
 Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple
 was,
 And is, despite of war and wasting fire,
 And years, that bade thy worship to
 expire:
 But worse than steel, and flame, and
 ages slow,
 Is the dread sceptre and dominion dire
 Of men who never felt the sacred glow
 That thoughts of thee and thine on polish'd
 breasts bestow.

II

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
 Where are thy men of might? thy grand
 in soul?
 Gone—glimmering through the dream
 of things that were:
 First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
 They won, and pass'd away—is this the
 whole?
 A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an
 hour!
 The warrior's weapon and the sophist's
 stole
 Are sought in vain, and o'er each moul-
 dering tower,
 Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the
 shade of power.

III

Son of the morning, rise! approach you
 here!
 Come—but molest not yon defenceless
 urn:
 Look on this spot—a nation's sepul-
 chre!
 Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer
 burn.
 Even gods must yield—religions take
 their turn:
 'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's—and
 other creeds
 Will rise with other years, till man shall
 learn
 Vainly his incense soars, his victim
 bleeds
 Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose
 hope is built on reeds.

IV

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to
 heaven—
 Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to
 know
 Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly
 given,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

That being, thou wouldst be again, and
 go,
 Thou know'st not, reck'st not, to what
 region, so
 On earth no more, but mingled with the
 skies?
 Still wilt thou dream on future joy and
 woe?
 Regard and weigh yon dust before it
 flies:
 That little urn saith more than thousand
 homilies.

V

Or burst the vanish'd Hero's lofty
 mound;
 Far on the solitary shore he sleeps:
 He fell, and falling nations mourn'd
 around;
 But now not one of saddening thousands
 weeps,
 Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
 Where demi-gods appear'd, as records
 tell.
 Remove yon skull from out the scatter'd
 heaps:
 Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
 Why ev'n the worm at last disdains her
 shatter'd cell!

VI

Look on its broken arch, its ruin'd wall,
 Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
 Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
 The dome of Thought, the palace of the
 Soul:
 Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless
 hole,
 The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit,
 And Passion's host, that never brook'd
 control:
 Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
 People this lonely tower, this tenement re-
 fit?

VII

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest
 son!
 'All that we know is, nothing can be
 known.'
 Why should we shrink from what we
 cannot shun?
 Each hath his pang, but feeble sufferers
 groan
 With brain-born dreams of evil all their
 own.
 Pursue what Chance or Fate pro-
 claimeth best;
 Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
 There no forced banquet claims the
 sated guest,
 But Silence spreads the couch of ever
 welcome rest.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

VIII

Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd,
there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious
lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we fear'd to hear no
more!
Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to
sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who
taught the right!

IX

There, thou!—whose love and life to-
gether fled,
Have left me here to love and live in
vain—
Twined with my heart, and can I deem
thee dead
When busy Memory flashes on my
brain?
Well—I will dream that we may meet
again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then
remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 'twere bliss enough to know thy
spirit blest!

X

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken
base;
Here, son of Saturn! was thy fav'rite
throne:
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me
trace
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-
place.
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye
Restore what Time hath labour'd to de-
face.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing
sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek
carols by.

But who, of all the plunderers of yon
fane
On high, where Pallas linger'd, loth to
flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign;
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was
he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could
be!

England I joy no child he was of
thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what
once was free;
Yet they could violate each saddening
shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long-
reluctant brine.

XII

But most the modern Pict's ignoble
boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time
hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as
hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand
prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor re-
mains:
Her sons, too weak the sacred shrine to
guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's
pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of
Despot's chains.

XIII

What! shall it e'er be said by British
tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her
bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's
ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia,
bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding
land:
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name
endears,
Tore down those remnants with a
harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants
left to stand.

Where was thine Ægis, Pallas! that ap-
pall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Pelcus' son? whom Hell in vain
enthrall'd,
His shade from Hades upon that dread
day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the chief
once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to
shield before.

XV

Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks
on thee,
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they
loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering
shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best be-
hoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be re-
stored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle
they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom
gored,
And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to
northern climes abhorr'd!

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the
wave?
Little reck'd he of all that men regret;
No loved-one now in feign'd lament
could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended
gave,
Ere the cold stranger pass'd to other
climes:
Hard is his heart whom charms may not
enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and

XVII

He that has sail'd upon the dark blue
sea
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair
sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze
may be,
The white sail set, the gallant frigate
tight;
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the
right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the
bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in
their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dash-
ing prow.

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted can-
opy,
The hoarse command, the busy hum-
ming din,
When, at a word, the tops are mann'd
on high:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Hark, to the Boatswain's call, the cheer-
ing cry!
While through the seaman's hand the
tackle glides;
Or schoolboy Midshipman that, stand-
ing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill be-
tides,
And well the docile crew that skilful
urchin guides.

XIX

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant
walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth re-
main
For the lone chieftain, who majestic
stalks,
Silent and fear'd by all—not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would
preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever
balks
Conquest and fame: but Britons rarely
swerve
From law, however stern, which tends
their strength to nerve.

XX

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compel-
ling gale!
Till the broad sun withdraws his lessen-
ing ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken
sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy
way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull de-
lay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest
breeze!
What leagues are lost, before the dawn
of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sail haul'd down to halt for
logs like these!

XXI

The moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing
waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids
believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless
hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors
love;
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure featly
move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were
free to rove.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

XXII

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;
But Mauritania's giant shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

XXIV

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The soul forgets her schemes of hope and pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possess'd
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steepes and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view
her stores unroll'd.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less,
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII

More blest the life of godly eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at eve upon the giant height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been
Will wistful linger on that hallow'd spot;
Then slowly tear him from the 'witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well-known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their winged sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn!—lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
 The sister tenants of the middle deep;
 There for the weary still a haven smiles,
 Though the fair goddess long hath
 ceased to weep,
 And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to
 keep
 For him who dared prefer a mortal
 bride:
 Here, too, his boy essay'd the dreadful
 leap
 Stern Mentor urged from high to yon-
 der tide;
 While thus of both bereft, the nymph-
 queen doubly sigh'd.

XXX

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
 But trust not this: too easy youth, be-
 ware!
 A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous
 throne,
 And thou mayst find a new Calypso
 there.
 Sweet Florence! could another ever
 share
 This wayward, loveless heart, it would
 be thine:
 But check'd by every tie, I may not dare
 To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
 Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang
 for mine.

XXXI

Thus Harold deem'd, as on that lady's
 eye
 He look'd, and met its beam without a
 thought
 Save admiration glancing harmless by:
 Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
 Who knew his votary often lost and
 caught,
 But knew him as his worshipper no
 more,
 And ne'er again the boy his bosom
 sought:
 Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
 Well deem'd the little God his ancient
 sway was o'er.

XXXII

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some
 amaze,
 One who, 'twas said, still sigh'd to all
 he saw,
 Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her
 gaze,
 Which others hail'd with real or mimic
 awe,
 Their hope, their doom, their punish-
 ment, their law;
 All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen
 claims:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And much she marvell'd that a youth so
 raw
 Nor felt, nor feign'd at least, the oft-told
 flames,
 Which, though sometimes they frown, yet
 rarely anger dames.

XXXIII

Little knew she that seeming marble
 heart,
 Now mask'd in silence or withheld by
 pride,
 Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
 And spread its snares licentious far and
 wide;
 Nor from the base pursuit had turn'd
 aside,
 As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
 But Harold on such arts no more relied;
 And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
 Yet never would he join the lover's
 whining crew.

XXXIV

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's
 breast,
 Who thinks that wanton thing is won by
 sighs;
 What careth she for hearts when once
 Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes;
 But not too humbly, or she will despise
 Thee and thy suit, though told in
 moving tropes:
 Disguise ev'n tenderness, if thou art
 wise;
 Brisk Confidence still best with woman
 copes:
 Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion
 crowns thy hopes.

XXXV

'Tis an old lesson; Time approves it
 true,
 And those who know it best deplore it
 most;
 When all is won that all desire to woo,
 The paltry prize is hardly worth the
 cost:
 Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour
 lost,
 These are thy fruits, successful Passion!
 these!
 If, kindly cruel, early hope is crost,
 Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
 Not to be cured when love itself forgets to
 please.

XXXVI

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
 For we have many a mountain-path to
 tread,
 And many a varied shore to sail along,
 By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction,
 led—

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought;
Or e'er in new Utopias were aared,
To teach man what he might be, or he
ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be
taught.

XXXVII

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,
Though always changing in her aspect
mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my
fill,
Her never-wean'd, though not her
favour'd child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polish'd dares pollute
her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have mark'd her when none
other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her
best in wrath.

XXXVIII

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the
wise,
And he his namesake, whose oft-baffled
foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous
emprize:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage
men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the
glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each
city's ken.

XXXIX

Childe Harold sail'd, and pass'd the
barren spot,
Where sad Penelope o'erlook'd the
wave;
And onward view'd the mount, not yet
forgot,
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's
grave.
Dark Sappho! could not verse immortal
save
That breast imbued with such immortal
fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's child-
ren may aspire.

XL

'Twas on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve
Childe Harold hail'd Leucadia's cape
afar;

A spot he longed to see, nor cared to
leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanish'd
war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar;
Mark them unmoved, for he would not
delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious
star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant
fight,
But loathed the bravo's trade, and laughed
at martial wight.

XLI

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hail'd the last resort of fruitless
love,
He felt, or deem'd he felt, no common
glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient
mount,
He watch'd the billows' melancholy
flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was
wont,
More placid seem'd his eye, and smooth
his pallid front.

XLII

Morn dawns: and with it stern Albania's
hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland
peak,
Robed half in mist, bedew'd with snowy
rills,
Array'd in many a dun and purple
streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them
break,
Disclose the dwelling of the moun-
taineer;
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his
beak,
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men
appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the
closing year.

XLIII

Now Harold found himself at length
alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long
adieu;
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to
view:
His breast was arm'd 'gainst fate, his
wants were few;

CANTO II

Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet;
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast, and welcomed summer's heat.

XLIV

Here the red cross, for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoff'd at by the circumcised,
Forgets that pride to pamper'd priesthood dear;
Churchman and votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring:
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose:
Now, like the hands that rear'd them, withering:
Imperial anarchs, doubling human woes!
God! was thy globe ordain'd for such to win and lose?

XLVI

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold pass'd o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales;
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XLVII

He pass'd bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold;
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

XLVIII

Monastic Zitz! from thy shady brow,
Thou small but favour'd spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deem'd of dignity,
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

The plain is far beneath—oh! let him
 seize
 Pure pleasure while he can; the scorch-
 ing ray
 Here pierceth not, impregnate with
 disease:
 Then let his length the loitering pilgrim
 lay,
 And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon,
 the eve away.

LI

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
 Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
 Chimæra's alps extend from left to
 right:
 Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
 Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow,
 the mountain-fir
 Nodding above; behold black Acheron!
 Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
 Pluto! if this be hell I look upon,
 Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade
 shall seek for none.

LII

Ne city's towers pollute the lovely view;
 Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
 Veil'd by the screen of hills: here men
 are few,
 Scanty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot:
 But, peering down each precipice, the
 goat
 Browseth; and, pensive o'er his scatter'd
 flock,
 The little shepherd in his white capote
 Doth lean his boyish form along the
 rock,
 Or in his cave awaits the tempest's short-
 lived shock.

LIII

Oh! where, Dodona! is thine aged
 grove,
 Prophetic fount, and oracle divine?
 What valley echoed the response of
 Jove?
 What trace remaineth of the Thunder-
 er's shrine?
 All, all forgotten—and shall man repine
 That his frail bonds to fleeting life are
 broke?
 Cease, fool! the fate of gods may well
 be thine:
 Wouldst thou survive the marble or the
 oak?
 When nations, tongues, and worlds must
 sink beneath the stroke!

Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains
 fall;
 Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
 Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale

As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye:
 Ev'n on a plain no humble beauties lie,
 Where some bold river breaks the long
 expanse,
 And woods along the banks are waving
 high,
 Whose shadows in the glassy waters
 dance,
 Or with the moonbeam sleep in midnight's
 solemn trance.

LV

The sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
 And Laos wide and fierce came roaring
 by;
 The shades of wonted night were
 gathering yet,
 When, down the steep banks winding
 warily,
 Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the
 sky,
 The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
 Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and
 drawing nigh,
 He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
 Swelling the breeze that sigh'd along the
 lengthening glen.

LVI

He pass'd the sacred Haram's silent
 tower,
 And underneath the wide o'erarching
 gate
 Survey'd the dwelling of this chief of
 power,
 Where all around proclaim'd his high
 estate.
 Amidst no common pomp the despot
 sat,
 While busy preparation shook the
 court,
 Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and
 santons wait;
 Within, a palace, and, without, a fort:
 Here men of every clime appear to make
 resort.

Richly caparison'd, a ready row
 Of armed horse, and many a warlike
 store,
 Circled the wide-extending court below;
 Above, strange groups adorn'd the
 corridore;
 And oft-times through the area's echo-
 ing door,
 Some high-capp'd Tartar spurr'd his
 steed away:
 The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and
 the Moor,
 Here mingled in their many-hued array,
 While the deep war-drum's sound an-
 nounced the close of day.

LVIII

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
 With shawl-girt head and ornamented
 gun,
 And gold-embroider'd garments, fair to
 see;
 The crimson-scarfed men of Macedon;
 The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
 And crooked glaive; the lively, supple
 Greek;
 And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
 The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to
 speak,
 Master of all around, too potent to be
 meek,

LIX

Are mix'd conspicuous: some recline in
 groups,
 Scanning the motley scene that varies
 round;
 There some grave Moslem to devotion
 stoops,
 And some that smoke, and some that
 play, are found;
 Here the Albanian proudly treads the
 ground;
 Half whispering there the Greek is
 heard to prate;
 Hark! from the mosque the nightly
 solemn sound,
 The Muezzin's call doth shake the
 minaret,
 'There is no god but God!—to prayer—
 lo! God is great!'

LX

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
 Through the long day its penance did
 maintain:
 But when the lingering twilight hour
 was past,
 Revel and feast assumed the rule again:
 Now all was bustle, and the menial train
 Prepared and spread the plenteous
 board within;
 The vacant gallery now seem'd made in
 vain,
 But from the chambers came the
 mingling din,
 As page and slave anon were passing out
 and in.

LXI

Here woman's voice is never heard:
 apart,
 And scarce permitted, guarded, veil'd,
 to move,
 She yields to one her person and her
 heart,
 Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to
 rove:
 For, not unhappy in her master's love,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
 Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
 Herself more sweetly rears the babe she
 bears,
 Who never quits the breast, no meaner
 passion shares.

In marble-paved pavilion, where a
 spring
 Of living water from the centre rose,
 Whose bubbling did a genial freshness
 fling,
 And soft voluptuous couches breathed
 repose,
 Ali reclined, a man of war and woes:
 Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
 While Gentleness her milder radiance
 throws
 Along that aged venerable face,
 The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him
 with disgrace.

LXIII

It is not that yon hoary lengthening
 beard
 Ill suits the passions which belong to
 youth;
 Love conquers age—so Hafiz hath
 averr'd,
 So sings the Teian, and he sings in
 sooth—
 But crimes that scorn the tender voice
 of ruth,
 Beseeming all men ill, but most the man
 In years, have mark'd him with a tiger's
 tooth;
 Blood follows blood, and, through their
 mortal span,
 In bloodier acts conclude those who with
 blood began.

LXIV

'Mid many things most new to ear and
 eye
 The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
 And gazed around on Moslem luxury,
 Till quickly wearied with that spacious
 seat
 Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice
 retreat
 Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
 And were it humbler, it in sooth were
 sweet;
 But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
 And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the
 zest of both destroys.

LXV

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they
 lack
 Not virtues, were those virtues
 mature.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous
need:
Their wrath how deadly! but their
friendship sure,
When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed
Unshaken rushing on where'er their chief
may lead.

LXVI

Childe Harold saw them in their chief-
tain's tower
Thronging to war in splendour and
success;
And after view'd them, when, within
their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress;
That saddening hour when bad men
hotlier press:
But these did shelter him beneath their
roof,
When less barbarians would have
cheer'd him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood
aloof—
In aught that tries the heart how few
withstand the proof!

LXVII

It chanced that adverse winds once
drove his bark
Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn more;
Yet for a while the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where treachery might
lurk:
At length they ventured forth, though
doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank
and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient
butcher-work.

LXVIII

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretch'd the
welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dan-
gerous swamp,
Kinder than polish'd slaves, though not
so bland,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their
garments damp,
And fill'd the bowl, and trimm'd the
cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare; though homely,
all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare
stamp:
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at
least the bad.

LXIX

It came to pass, that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain-
land,
Combined marauders half-way barr'd
egress,
And wasted far and near with glaive and
brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania's forest wide,
In war well season'd, and with labours
tann'd,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his further bank Ætolia's wolds
espied.

LXX

Where lone Utraikey forms its circling
cove,
And weary waves retire to gleam at
rest,
How brown the foliage of the green hill's
grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's
breast,
As winds come lightly whispering from
the west,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's
serene:—
Here Harold was received a welcome
guest;
Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle
scene,
For many a joy could he from Night's soft
presence glean.

LXXI

On the smooth shore the night-fires
brightly blazed,
The feast was done, the red wine circling
fast,
And he that unawares had there ygzazed
With gaping wonderment had stared
aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour
was past,
The native revels of the troop began;
Each Palikar his sabre from him cast,
And bounding hand in hand, man link'd
to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long daunced
the kirtled clan.

LXXII

Childe Harold at a little distance stood
And view'd, but not displeased, the
revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however
rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to
see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent,
glee;

7

And, as the flames along their faces
gleam'd,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flash-
ing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles
stream'd,
While thus in concert they this lay half
sang, half screamed:—

1

TAMBOURGI! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of
war;
All the sons of the mountains arise at the
note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

2

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
In his snowy camese and his shaggy
capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his
wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream
from the rock.

3

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never
forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance
forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

4

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the
chase;
But those scarfs of blood-red shall be
redder, before
The sabre is sheathed and the battle is o'er.

5

Then the pirates of Parga that dwell by the
waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be
slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley
and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on
shore.

I ask not the pleasures that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must
buy;
Shall win the young bride with her long
flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall
tear.

I love the fair face of the maid in her
youth,
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall
soothe;
Let her bring from the chamber her many-
toned lyre,
And sing us a song on the fall of her sire.

8

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquer'd, the con-
queror's yell;
The roofs that we fired, and the plunder
we shared,
The wealthy we slaughter'd, the lovely we
spared.

9

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve
the Vizier:
Since the days of our prophet the Crescent
ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pashaw.

10

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is
sped,
Let the yellow-hair'd Giaours view his
horse-tail with dread;
When his Delhis come dashing in blood
o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite
ranks!

11

Selictar! unsheathe then our chief's scimi-
tar;
Tambourgi! thy 'larum gives promise of
war.
Ye mountains, that see us descend to the
shore,
Shall view us as victors, or view us no
more!

LXXIII

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though
fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd child-
ren forth,
And long accustom'd bondage un-
create?
Not such thy sons who whilome did
await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral
strait—
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall re-
sume,
Leap from Eurota's banks, and call thee
from the tomb?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

LXXIV

Spirit of freedom! when on Phyle's
brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his
train,
Couldst thou forebode the dismal hour
which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic
plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the
chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turk-
ish hand;
From birth till death enslaved; in word, in
deed, unmann'd.

LXXV

In all save form alone, how changed!
and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in
each eye,
Who would but deem their bosoms
burn'd anew
With thy unquenched beam, lost
Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers'
heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly
sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's
mournful page.

LXXVI

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must
strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must
be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no!
True, they may lay your proud despoil-
ers low,
But not for you will Freedom's altars
flame.
Shades of the Helots! triumph o'er your
foe!
Greece! change thy lords, thy state is
still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thy years
of shame.

LXXVII

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
The Giaour from Othman's race again
may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former
guest;
Or Wahab's rebel brood, who dared
divest

The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the
West;
But ne'er will freedom seek this fated
soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years
of endless toil.

LXXVIII

Yet mark their mirth—ere lenten days
begin,
That penance which their holy rites
prepare
To shrive from man his weight of
mortal sin,
By daily abstinence and nightly prayer:
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance
wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to
all,
To take of pleasaunce each his secret
share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carni-
val.

LXXIX

And whose more rife with merriment
than thine,
Oh Stamboul! once the empress of their
reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's
shrine,
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain:
(Alas! her woes will still pervade my
strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free
her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must
feign,
Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard
such song,
As woo'd the eye, and thrill'd the Bos-
phorus along.

LXXX

Loud was the lightsome tumult on the
shore,
Oft Music changed, but never ceased her
tone,
And timely echo'd back the measured
oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant
moan:
The Queen of tides, on high consenting
shone,
And when a transient breeze swept o'er
the wave,
'Twas, as if darting from her heavenly
throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected
gave,
Till sparkling billows seem'd to light the
banks they lave.

LXXXI

Glanced many a light caïque along the
foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of
the land,
No thought had man or maid of rest or
home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling
hand
Exchanged the look few bosoms may
withstand,
Or gently prest, return'd the pressure
still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy
rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeem Life's
years of ill!

LXXXII

But, midst the throng in merry mas-
querade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with
secret pain,
Even through the closest searment half
betray'd?
To such the gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome
crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern
disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly
loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for
the shroud!

LXXXIII

This must he feel, the true-born son of
Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot still can
boast:
Not such as prate of war, but skulk in
peace,
The bondsman's peace, who sighs for
all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can
accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the
sword:
Ah! Greece! they love thee least who
owe thee most—
Their birth, their blood, and that sub-
lime record
Of hero sires, who shame thy now de-
generate horde!

LXXXIV

When riseth Lacedemon's hardihood,
When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,
When Athens' children are with hearts
endued,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth
to men,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Then may'st thou be restored; but not
till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form
a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust: and
when
Can man its shatter'd splendour reno-
vate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time
and Fate?

LXXXV

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and godlike men, art
thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite
now:
Thy fanes, thy temples to thy surface
bow,
Commingle slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic
plough:
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded
Worth;

LXXXVI

Save where some solitary column
mourns
Above its prostrate brethren of the
cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the
wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten
grave,
Where the gray stones and unmolested
grass
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave;
While strangers only not regardless
pass,
Lingering like me, perchance, to gaze, and
sigh 'Alas!'

LXXXVII

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as
wild;
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are
thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva
smiled,
And still his honey'd wealth Hymettus
yields;
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress
builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy moun-
tain-air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles
glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still
is fair.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO II

LXXXVIII

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon;
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crush'd thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

LXXXIX

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign lord;
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame
The Battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bow'd beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which utter'd, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career,

XC

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene—what now remaineth here?
What sacred trophy marks the hallow'd ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?
The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger! spurns around.

XCI

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng;
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;

Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

XCII

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;
He that is lonely, hither let him roam,
And gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth:
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side,
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste;
But spare its relics—let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed:
Revere the remnants nations once revered:
So may our country's name be undisgraced,
So may'st thou prosper where thy youth was rear'd,
By every honest joy of love and life endeard!

XCIV

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hast soothed thine idlesse with inglorious lays,
Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder minstrels in these later days:
To such resign the strife for fading bays—
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen reproach nor partial praise,
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve,
And none are left to please when none are left to love.

CANTO II]

XCV

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!
Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my being? thou hast ceased to be!
Nor staid to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see—
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er return'd to find fresh cause to roam!

XCVI

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death! thou hast;
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend;
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatch'd the little joy that life had yet to lend.

XCVII

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak;
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique?
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

XCVIII

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
O'er hearts divided and o'er hopes destroy'd:
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoy'd,
And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloy'd.

CANTO THE THIRD

'Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose; il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps.'—Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept. 7, 1776.

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
ADA! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted,—not as now we part,
But with a hope.—
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower appears.

IV

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar: it may be, that in vain I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;
So that it wean me from the weary dream Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below Can love or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI

'Tis to create, and in creating live A being more intense, that we endow With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

Yet must I think less wildly —I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'er-wrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:

And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time cannot abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this:—but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deem'd its spring perpetual; but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd
And sheath'd with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI

But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor
 seek
 To wear it? who can curiously behold
 The smoothness and the sheen of
 beauty's cheek,
 Nor feel the heart can never all grow
 old?
 Who can contemplate Fame through
 clouds unfold
 The star which rises o'er her steep, nor
 climb?
 Harold, once more within the vortex,
 roll'd
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's
 fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most
 unfit
 Of men to herd with Man; with whom
 he held
 Little in common; untaught to submit
 His thoughts to others, though his soul
 was quell'd
 In youth by his own thoughts; still un-
 compell'd,
 He would not yield dominion of his mind
 To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
 Proud though in desolation; which
 could find
 A life within itself, to breathe without
 mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him
 were friends;
 Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his
 home;
 Where a blue sky, and glowing clime,
 extends,
 He had the passion and the power to
 roam;
 The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's
 foam,
 Were unto him companionship; they
 spake
 A mutual language, clearer than the
 tone
 Of his land's tongue, which he would
 oft forsake
 For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams
 on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the
 stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings
 bright
 As their own beams; and earth, and
 earthborn jars,
 And human frailties, were forgotten
 quite:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Could he have kept his spirit to that
 flight
 He had been happy; but this clay will
 sink
 Its spark immortal, envying it the light
 To which it mounts, as if to break the
 link
 That keeps us from yon heaven which
 woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a
 thing
 Restless and worn, and stern and weari-
 some,
 Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with
 clipt wing,
 To whom the boundless air alone were
 home:
 Then came his fit again, which to o'er-
 come,
 As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
 His breast and beak against his wiry
 dome
 Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the
 heat
 Of his impeded soul would through his
 bosom eat.

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
 With nought of hope left, but with less
 of gloom;
 The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
 That all was over on this side the tomb,
 Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
 Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the
 plunder'd wreck
 When mariners would madly meet their
 doom
 With draughts intemperate on the
 sinking deck,—
 Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore
 to check.

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's
 dust!
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred
 below!
 Is the spot mark'd with no colossal
 bust?
 Nor column trophied for triumphal
 show?
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler
 so,
 As the ground was before, thus let it
 be;—
 How that red rain hath made the harvest
 grow!
 And is this all the world has gain'd by
 thee,
 Thou first and last of fields! king-making
 Victory?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of
skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly
Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave
annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting
too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle
flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent
plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations
through;
Ambition's life and labours all were
vain;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's
broken chain.

XXIX

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the
bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth
more free?
Did nations combat to make *One*
submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sove-
reignty?
What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down,
shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering
lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove*
before ye praise!

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no
more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with
hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up
before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain
years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by
the accord
Of roused-up millions; all that most
endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a
sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens'
tyrant lord.

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and
bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and
brave men;

A thousand hearts beat happily; and
when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which
spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like
a rising knell!

XXII

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the
wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be uncon-
fined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and
Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying
feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in
once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than
before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's
opening roar!

XXIII

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he
did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's pro-
phetic ear;
And when they smiled because he
deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody
bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone
could quell;
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost
fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and
fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of
distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour
ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own love-
liness;
And there were sudden partings, such
as press
The life from out young hearts, and
choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who
could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual
eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful
morn could rise!

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste:
 the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clat-
 tering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous
 speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of
 war;
 And the deep thunder peal on peal
 afar;
 And near, the beat of the alarming
 drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning
 star;
 While throng'd the citizens with terror
 dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips—'The foe!
 they come! they come!'

XXVI

And wild and high the 'Cameron's
 gathering' rose!
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's
 hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her
 Saxon foes:—
 How in the noon of night that pibroch
 thrills,
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath
 which fills
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-
 tainers
 With the fierce native daring which
 instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand
 years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each
 clansman's ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her
 green leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above
 shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope shall moulder
 cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal-sound
 of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms,—
 the day
 Battle's magnificently stern array!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which
 when rent
 The earth is cover'd thick with other
 clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd
 and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red
 burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps
 than mine:
 Yet one I would select from that proud
 throng,
 Partly because they blend me with his
 line,
 And partly that I did his sire some
 wrong,
 And partly that bright names will hal-
 low song;
 And his was of the bravest, and when
 shower'd
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd
 files along,
 Even where the thickest of war's tem-
 pest lower'd,
 They reach'd no nobler breast than thine,
 young gallant Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking
 hearts for thee,
 And mine were nothing had I such to
 give;
 But when I stood beneath the fresh
 green tree,
 Which living waves where thou didst
 cease to live,
 And saw around me the wide field revive
 With fruits and fertile promise, and the
 Spring
 Came forth her work of gladness to
 contrive,
 With all her reckless birds upon the
 wing,
 I turn'd from all she brought to those she
 could not bring.

XXXI

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom
 each
 And one as all a ghastly gap did make
 In his own kind and kindred, whom to
 teach
 Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
 The Archangel's trump, not Glory's,
 must awake
 Those whom they thirst for; though the
 sound of Fame
 May for a moment soothe, it cannot
 slake
 The fever of vain longing, and the name
 So honour'd but assumes a stronger,
 bitterer claim.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length; and,
 smiling, mourn;
 The tree will wither long before it fall;
 The hull drives on, though mast and
 sail be torn;
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on
 the hall
 In massy hoariness; the ruin'd wall
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements
 are gone;
 The bars survive the captive they en-
 thrall;
 The day drags through, though storms
 keep out the sun;
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly
 live on

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the
 glass
 In every fragment multiplies; and makes
 A thousand images of one that was,
 The same, and still the more, the more
 it breaks;
 And thus the heart will do which not
 forsakes,
 Living in shatter'd guise; and still, and
 cold,
 And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow
 aches,
 Yet withers on till all without is old,
 Showing no visible sign, for such things
 are untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
 Vitality of poison,—a quick root
 Which feeds these deadly branches; for
 it were
 As nothing did we die; but Life will
 suit
 Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
 Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's
 shore,
 All ashes to the taste: Did man com-
 pute
 Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
 Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say,
 would he name threescore?

XXXV

The Psalmist number'd out the years of
 man:
 They are enough; and if thy tale be true,
 Thou, who didst grudge him even that
 fleeting span,
 More than enough, thou fatal Water-
 loo!
 Millions of tongues record thee, and
 anew
 Their children's lips shall echo them,
 and say—

'Here, where the sword united nations
 drew,
 Our countrymen were warring on that
 day!'
 And this is much, and all which will not
 pass away.

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst
 of men,
 Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,
 One moment of the mightiest, and
 again
 On little objects with like firmness fixt;
 Extreme in all things! hadst thou been
 betwixt,
 Thy throne had still been thine, or
 never been;
 For daring made thy rise as fall: thou
 seek'st
 Even now to re-assume the imperial
 mien,
 And shake again the world, the Thunderer
 of the scene!

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art
 thou!
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild
 name
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds
 than now
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of
 Fame,
 Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and
 became
 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou
 wert
 A god unto thyself; nor less the same
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
 Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou
 didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man—in high or
 low,
 Battling with nations, flying from the
 field;
 Now making monarchs' necks thy
 footstool, now
 More than thy meanest soldier taught
 to yield;
 An empire thou couldst crush, com-
 mand, rebuild,
 But govern not thy pettiest passion,
 nor,
 However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,
 Look through thine own, nor curb the
 lust of war,
 Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the
 loftiest star.

XXXXX

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the
 turning tide
 With that untaught innate philosophy,
 Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep
 pride,
 Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
 When the whole host of hatred stood
 hard by,
 To watch and mock thee shrinking,
 thou hast smiled
 With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—
 When Fortune fled her spoil'd and
 favourite child,
 He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon
 him piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
 Ambition steel'd thee on too far to
 show
 That just habitual scorn, which could
 contemn
 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to
 feel, not so
 To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to
 use
 Till they were turn'd unto thine over-
 throw:
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or
 lose;
 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot
 who choose.

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headland rock,
 Thou hadst been made to stand or fall
 alone,
 Such scorn of man had help'd to brave
 the shock;
 But men's thoughts were the steps which
 paved thy throne,
 Their admiration thy best weapon
 shone;
 The part of Philip's son was thine, not
 then
 (Unless aside thy purple had been
 thrown)
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too
 wide a den.

XLII

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
 And *there* hath been thy bane; there is
 a fire
 And motion of the soul which will not
 dwell
 In its own narrow being, but aspire
 Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
 And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-
 more,
 Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
 Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever
 bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have
 made men mad
 By their contagion; Conquerors and
 Kings,
 Founders of sects and systems, to whom
 add
 Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all un-
 quiet things
 Which stir too strongly the soul's
 secret springs,
 And are themselves the fools to those
 they fool;
 Envied, yet how unenviable! what
 stings
 Are theirs! One breast laid open were
 a school
 Which would unteach mankind the lust
 to shine or rule:

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
 A storm whereon they ride, to sink at
 last,
 And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
 That should their days, surviving perils
 past,
 Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
 With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
 Even as a flame unfed, which runs to
 waste
 With its own flickering, or a sword laid
 by,
 Which eats into itself, and rusts inglori-
 ously.

He who ascends to mountain-tops,
 shall find
 The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds
 and snow;
 He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
 Must look down on the hate of those
 below.
 Though high *above* the sun of glory
 glow,
 And far *beneath* the earth and ocean
 spread,
 Round him are icy rocks, and loudly
 blow
 Contending tempests on his naked head,
 And thus reward the toils which to those
 summits led.

XLVI

Away with these! true Wisdom's world
 will be
 Within its own creation, or in thine,
 Maternal Nature! for who seems like
 thee,
 Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and
dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield,
mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern
farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin
greenly dwells.

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty
mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser
crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying
wind,
Or holding dark communion with the
crowd.
There was a day when they were young
and proud;
Banners on high, and battles pass'd
below;
But they who fought are in a bloody
shroud,
And those which waved are shredless
dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no
future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath those battlements, within those
walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in
proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed
halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors
should have
But history's purchased page to call
them great?
A wider space, an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their
souls were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their
shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous
pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts
would glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and
drew on
Keen contest and destruction near
allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief
won,
Saw the discolour'd Rhine beneath its
ruin run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding
river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they
flow
Through banks whose beauty would
endure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation
so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface
mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then
to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem
such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream?—that
it should Lethe be.

LI

A thousand battles have assail'd thy
banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd
away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his
weltering ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what
are they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of
yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear
stream
Glass'd, with its dancing light, the sunny
ray;
But o'er the blacken'd memory's blight-
ing dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping
as they seem.

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,
Yet not insensible to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even
exile dear:
Though on his brow were graven lines
austere,
And tranquil sternness, which had ta'en
the place
Of feelings fiercer far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with
transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though
his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to
dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart
must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though
disgust

CANTO III]

Hath wean'd it from all worldlings:
 thus he felt,
 For there was soft remembrance, and
 sweet trust
 In one fond breast, to which his own
 would melt,
 And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom
 dwelt.

LIV

And he had learn'd to love,—I know not
 why,
 For this in such as him seems strange
 of mood,—
 The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
 Even in its earliest nurture; what sub-
 dued,
 To change like this, a mind so far im-
 bued
 With scorn of man, it little boots to
 know;
 But thus it was; and though in solitude
 Small power the nipp'd affections have
 to grow,
 In him this glow'd when all beside had
 ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath
 been said,
 Which unto his was bound by stronger
 ties
 Than the church links withal; and,
 though unwed,
 That love was pure, and, far above dis-
 guise,
 Had stood the test of mortal enmities
 Still undivided, and cemented more
 By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
 But this was firm, and from a foreign
 shore
 Well to that heart might his these absent
 greetings pour!

1

The castled crag of Drachenfels
 Frowns o'er the wide and winding
 Rhine,
 Whose breast of waters broadly swells
 Between the banks which bear the vine,
 And hills all rich with blossom'd trees,
 And fields which promise corn and
 wine,
 And scatter'd cities crowning these,
 Whose far white walls along them
 shine,
 Have strew'd a scene, which I should
 see
 With double joy wert *thou* with me.

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
 And hands which offer early flowers,
 Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
 Above, the frequent feudal towers

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Through green leaves lift their walls
 of gray;
 And many a rock which steeply lowers,
 And noble arch in proud decay,
 Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;
 But one thing want these banks of
 Rhine,—
 Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

3

I send the lilies given to me;
 Though long before thy hand they
 touch,
 I know that they must wither'd be,
 But yet reject them not as such;
 For I have cherish'd them as dear,
 Because they yet may meet thine eye,
 And guide thy soul to mine even here,
 When thou behold'st them drooping
 nigh,
 And know'st them gather'd by the
 Rhine,
 And offer'd from my heart to thine!

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
 The charm of this enchanted ground,
 And all its thousand turns disclose
 Some fresher beauty varying round:
 The haughtiest breast its wish might
 bound
 Through life to dwell delighted here;
 Nor could on earth a spot be found
 To nature and to me so dear,
 Could thy dear eyes in following mine
 Still sweeten more these banks of
 Rhine!

By Coblenz, on a rise of gentle ground,
 There is a small and simple pyramid,
 Crowning the summit of the verdant
 mound;
 Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
 Our enemy's—but let not that forbids
 Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early
 tomb
 Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough
 soldier's lid,
 Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
 Falling for France, whose rights he battled
 to resume.

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young
 career,—
 His mourners were two hosts, his friends
 and foes;
 And fitly may the stranger lingering here
 Pray for his gallant spirit's bright re-
 pose;
 For he was Freedom's champion, one of
 those,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

The few in number, who had not o'er-
step
The charter to chastise which she be-
stows
On such as wield her weapons; he had
kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men
o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shatter'd
wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her
height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell
and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did
light:
A tower of victory! from whence the
flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the
plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could
never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Sum-
mer's rain—
On which the iron shower for years had
pour'd in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long
delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his
way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls
united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might
stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease
to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were
here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too
t not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the
year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like
thine;
The mind is colour'd by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely
Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful heart of parting
praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glar-
ing shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories
of old days.

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's
sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's
gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls
between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had
turrets been,
In mockery of man's art; and these
withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Em-
pires near them fall.

LXII

But these recede. Above me are the
Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy
scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche—the thunderbolt of
snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to
show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet
leave vain man below.

LXIII

But ere these matchless heights I dare to
scan,
There is a spot should not be pass'd in
vain,—
Morat! the proud, the patriot field!
where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the
slain,
Nor blush for those who conquer'd on
that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless
host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument;—the Sty-
gian coast
Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd
each wandering ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage
vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall
stand;
They were true Glory's stainless vic-
tories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely
cause

CANTO III]

Of vice-entail'd Corruption; they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some
Draconic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old
days;
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of
years,
And looks as with the wild-bewilder'd
gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there
it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Adventicum, hath strew'd her
subject lands.

LXVI

And there—oh! sweet and sacred be the
name!—
Julia—the daughter, the devoted—gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, be-
neath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a
father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers
would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was
just,
And then she died on him she could not
save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a
bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one
heart, one dust.

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not
pass away,
And names that must not wither, though
the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their
death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine
snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things
below.

LXVIII

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal
face,
The mirror where the stars and moun-
tains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height
and hue:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

There is too much of man here, to look
through
With a fit mind the might which I be-
hold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd
than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me
in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the
spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the
coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for
wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where
none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment we may plunge our
years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of
Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the
sea
The boldest steer but where their ports
invite;
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and an-
chor'd ne'er shall be.

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy
Rhône,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth
make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to
inflict or bear?

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the
hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul
can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving
plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in
vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was
cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to
spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as
the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted
wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round
our being cling.

LXXIV

And when, at length, the mind shall be
all free
From what it hates in this degraded
form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more
warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each
spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the
immortal lot?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and
skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not con-
temn
All objects, if compared with these? and
stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly
phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd
below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts
which dare not glow?

LXXVI

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the
urn,
To look on One, whose dust was once
all fire,

A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while—a passing
guest,
Where he became a being,—whose
desire
Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish
quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed
all rest.

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild
Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from
woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first
drew
The breath which made him wretched;
yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and
cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a
heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as
they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feel-
ingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence:—as a
tree
On fire by lightning, with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to
be
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the
same.
But his was not the love of living
dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our
dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd
though it seems.

LXXIX

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that's wild and
sweet;
This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fever'd lip would
greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his
would meet;
But to that gentle touch through brain
and breast
Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devour-
ing heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more
blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they
seek possess.

LXXX

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
 Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
 For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
 'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
 But he was phrensied,—wherefore, who may know?
 Since cause might be which skill could never find;
 But he was phrensied by disease or woe,
 To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
 As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
 Those oracles which set the world in flame,
 Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
 Did he not this for France? which lay before
 Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years?
 Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
 Till by the voice of him and his compeers
 Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monument!
 The wreck of old opinions—things which grew,
 Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
 And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
 But good with ill they also overthrew,
 Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
 Upon the same foundation, and renew
 Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refill'd
 As heretofore, because ambition was self-will'd.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
 Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
 They might have used it better, but, allured
 By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
 On one another; pity ceased to melt

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

With her once natural charities. But

Who in oppression's darkness caved
 had dwelt,
 They were not eagles, nourish'd with the day;
 What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
 The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
 That which disfigures it; and they who war
 With their own hopes, and have been vanquish'd, bear
 Silence, but not submission: in his lair
 Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
 Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
 It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
 To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To waft me from distraction; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice re-proved,
 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk,
 yet clear,
 Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
 Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear
 Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the
brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instill,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her
hues.

LXXXVIII

Yestars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read
the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be for-
given,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have
named themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still—though
not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling
most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too
deep:—
All heaven and earth are still: From the
high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-
coast,
All is concentr'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then
doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which
makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty;—
'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial
power to harm.

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and
thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek

The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are
weak,
Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and
compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or
Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth
and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe
thy pray'r!

XCI

The sky is changed!—and such a change!
Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are won-
drous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags
among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one
lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a
tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty
shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her
aloud!

XCII

And this is in the night:—Most glorious
night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me
be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric
sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the
earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now,
the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its moun-
tain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earth-
quake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his
way between
Heights which appear as lovers who
have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so inter-
vene,
That they can meet no more, though
broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each
other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and
then departed:
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within them-
selves to wage.

CANTO III]

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath
 cleft his way,
 The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en
 his stand:
 For here, not one, but many, make their
 play,
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand
 to hand,
 Flashing and cast around; of all the
 band,
 The brightest through these parted hills
 hath fork'd
 His lightnings,—as if he did under-
 stand,
 That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
 There the hot shaft should blast whatever
 therein lurk'd.

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake,
 lightnings! ye!
 With night, and clouds, and thunder,
 and a soul
 To make these felt and feeling, well may
 be
 Things that have made me watchful; the
 far roll
 Of your departing voices, is the knoll
 Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
 But where of ye, O tempests! is the
 goal?
 Are ye like those within the human
 breast?
 Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some
 high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
 That which is most within me,—could
 I wreak
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus
 throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings,
 strong or weak,
 All that I would have sought, and all I
 seek,
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into
 one word,
 And that one word were Lightning, I
 would speak;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing
 it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
 With breath all incense, and with cheek
 all bloom,
 Laughing the clouds away with playful
 scorn,
 And living as if earth contain'd no
 tomb,—

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And glowing into day: we may resume
 The march of our existence: and thus I,
 Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find
 room
 And food for meditation, nor pass by
 Much, that may give us pause, if ponder'd
 fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of
 deep Love!
 Thine air is the young breath of passion-
 ate thought;
 Thy trees take root in Love; the snows
 above
 The very Glaciers have his colours
 caught,
 And sun-set into rose-hues sees them
 wrought
 By rays which sleep there lovingly: the
 rocks,
 The permanent crags, tell here of Love,
 who sought
 In them a refuge from the worldly
 shocks,
 Which stir and sting the soul with hope
 that woos, then mocks.

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are
 trod,—
 Undying Love's, who here ascends a
 throne
 To which the steps are mountains;
 where the god
 Is a pervading life and light,—so shown
 Not on those summits solely, nor alone
 In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
 His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath
 blown,
 His soft and summer breath, whose
 tender power
 Passes the strength of storms in their most
 desolate hour.

CI

All things are here of *him*; from the
 black pines,
 Which are his shade on high, and the
 loud roar
 Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the
 vines
 Which slope his green path downward
 to the shore,
 Where the bow'd waters meet him, and
 adore,
 Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the
 wood,
 The covert of old trees, with trunks all
 hoar,
 But light leaves, young as joy, stands
 where it stood,
 Offering to him, and his, a populous soli-
 tude.

CHILD HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO III]

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-form'd and many-colour'd
things,
Who worship him with notes more
sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of
spring,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which
brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here ex-
tend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one
mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn
that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who
knows
That tender mystery, will love the more;
For this is Love's recess, where vain
men's woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him
far from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or
grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

CIV

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau
this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which Passion must
allot
To the Mind's purified beings; 'twas the
ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone
unbound,
And hallow'd it with loveliness: 'tis
lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a
sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here
the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps
have rear'd a throne.

CV

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been
the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeath'd a
name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by
dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their
steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile

Thoughts which should call down thun-
der, and the flame
Of Heaven again assail'd, if Heaven the
while

On man and man's research could deign
do more than smile.

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various,—gay, grave, sage, or
wild,—
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule,—which, as
the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things
prone,—

Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake
a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting
thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious
year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning
wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge
severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony,—that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which
grew from fear,
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready
Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently
well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes,—for by
them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge,—far less con-
demn;
The hour must come when such things
shall be made
Known unto all, or hope and dread
allay'd
By slumber, on one pillow, in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie
decay'd;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is
just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works, again to
read
His Maker's, spread around me, and
suspend
This page, which from my reveries I
feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.

CANTO III]

The clouds above me to the white Alps
tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey
whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region,
where
The earth to her embrace compels the
powers of air.

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost
won thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of em-
pires; still,
The fount at which the panting mind
assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there
her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's
imperial hill.

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renew'd with no kind auspices:—to feel
We are not what we have been, and to
deem
We are not what we should be, and to
steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or
aught,—
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief or
zeal,—
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul:—No matter,—it is
taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into
song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile,—
The colouring of the scenes which fleet
along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to be-
guile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or
smile,
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone,—remember'd or
forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor
bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, nor cried
aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I
stood
Among them, but not of them; in a
shroud
Of thoughts which were not their
thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself
subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me,—
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that
there may be
Words which are things, hopes which
will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor
weave
Snares for the failing; I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely
grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they
seem,
That goodness is no name, and happiness
no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song
begun;
My daughter! with thy name thus much
shall end;
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the
friend
To whom the shadows of far years ex-
tend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst be-
hold,
My voice shall with thy future visions
blend,
And reach into thy heart, when mine is
cold,
A token and a tone, even from thy father's
mould.

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, to view thee
catch
Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to
thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's
kiss,—
This, it should seem, was not reserved
for me;
Yet this was in my nature: as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something
like to this.

CVXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim:
Though the grave closed between us,—
'twere the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; though to drain
My blood from out thy being were an aim,
And an attainment,—all would be in vain,—
Still thou wouldest love me, still that more than life retain.

CVXIII

The child of love, though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion. Of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee, but thy fire
Shall be more temper'd, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me.

CANTO THE FOURTH

'Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
Quel Monte che divide, e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l' altro, che la bagna.'
Ariosto, Satira iii.

TO

JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ., A.M., F.R.S.,
&c. &c. &c.

VENICE, January 2, 1818.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,

AFTER an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of Childe Harold, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better,—to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than—though not ungrateful—I can, or could be, to Childe Harold, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet,—to one, whom I have known long and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril,—to a friend often tried and never found wanting;—to yourself.

In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth; and in dedicating to you in its complete, or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years' intimacy with a man of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for minds like ours to give or to receive flattery; yet the praises of sincerity have ever been permitted to the voice of friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of good-will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the anniversary of the most unfortunate day of my past existence*, but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship, and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience without thinking better of his species and of himself.

It has been our fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of chivalry, history, and fable—Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were to us a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.

With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's 'Citizen of the World,' whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject are now a matter of indifference; the work is to depend on itself, and not on the writer; and the author, who has no resources in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of authors.

In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient

* His marriage.

CANTO IV]

for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us—though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode—to distrust, or at least defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary, as well as political party, appears to run, or to have run, so high, that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language—'Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l'antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima.' Italy has great names still—Canova, Monti, Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognara, Albizzi, Mezzofanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres; and in some the very highest—Europe—the World—has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri, that 'La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra—e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova.' Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours, that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched 'longing after immortality,'—the immortality of independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, 'Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più come era prima!' it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the carnage of Mont St. Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me,—

'Non movero mai corda
Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.'

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations, it were useless for Englishmen to inquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus; it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, 'Verily they will have their reward,' and at no very distant period.

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

BYRON.

I

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn
away—

The keystones of the arch! though all
were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which
Fate

Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits
supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers
have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing
the void.

VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from
Vacancy;
And this worn feeling peoples many a
page,
And, may be, that which grows beneath
mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and
hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which
the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skillful to diffuse:

VII

I saw or dream'd of such,—but let them
go,—
They came like truth, and disappear'd
like dreams;
And whatsoever they were—are now but
so:
I could replace them if I would; still
teems
My mind with many a form which aptly

Such as I sought for, and at moments
found;
Let these too go—for waking Reason
deems
Such overweening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights
surround.

VIII

I've taught me other tongues, and in
strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the
mind
Which is itself, no changes bring sur-

Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to
find
A country with—ay, or without man-
kind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to
be,—
Not without cause; and should I leave
behind
The inviolate island of the sage and
free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter
sea,

IX

Perhaps I loved it well: and should I
lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it—if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my
line
With my land's language: if too fond
and far
These aspirations in their scope in-
cline,—
If my fame should be, as my fortunes
are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull
Oblivion bar

X

My name from out the temple where the
dead
Are honour'd by the nations—let it be—
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
'Sparta hath many a worthier son than
he.'
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor
need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of
the tree
I planted: they have torn me, and I
I should have known what fruit would
spring from such a seed.

XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her
lord;
And, annual marriage now no more re-
new'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he
stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd
power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor
sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the
hour
When Venice was a queen with an un-
equall'd dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian
 reigns—
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor
 or knelt;
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and
 chains
 Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
 From power's high pinnacle, when they
 have felt
 The sunshine for a while, and downward
 go
 Like Lauwine loosen'd from the moun-
 tain's belt;
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
 Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's con-
 quering foe.

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of
 brass,
 Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
 But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
 Are they not bridled?—Venice, lost and
 won,
 Her thirteen hundred years of freedom
 done,
 Sinks, like a seaweed, into whence she
 rose!
 Better be whelm'd beneath the waves,
 and shun,
 Even in destruction's depth, her foreign
 foes,
 From whom submission wrings an in-
 famous repose.

XIV

In youth she was all glory,—a new Tyre;
 Her very by-word sprung from victory,
 The 'Planter of the Lion,' which
 through fire
 And blood she bore o'er subject earth
 and sea;
 Though making many slaves, herself
 still free,
 And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Otto-
 mite;
 Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch
 it, ye
 Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's
 fight!
 For ye are names no time nor tyranny can
 blight.

XV

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long
 file
 Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
 But where they dwelt, the vast and
 sumptuous pile
 Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid
 trust;
 Their sceptre broken, and their sword
 in rust,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Have yielded to the stranger: empty
 halls,
 Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such
 as must
 Too oft remind her who and what en-
 thrals,
 Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice'
 lovely walls.

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
 And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke
 of war,
 Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
 Her voice their only ransom from afar:
 See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the
 car
 Of the o'er-master'd victor stops, the
 reins
 Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar
 Starts from its belt—he rends his cap-
 tive's chains,
 And bids him thank the bard for freedom
 and his strains.

XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were
 thine,
 Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
 Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
 Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the
 knot
 Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
 Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
 Albion! to thee: the Ocean queen should
 not
 Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
 Of Venice think of thine, despite thy
 watery wall.

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
 Was as a fairy city of the heart,
 Rising like water-columns from the sea,
 Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the
 mart;
 And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shak-
 speare's art,
 Had stamp'd her image in me, and even
 so,
 Although I found her thus, we did not
 part;
 Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
 Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and
 a show.

XIX

I can repeople with the past—and of
 The present there is still for eye and
 thought,
 And meditation chasten'd down,
 enough;
 And more, it may be, than I hoped or
 sought;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

And of the happiest moments which
were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their col-
ours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot be-
numb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be
cold and dumb.

XX

But from their nature will the Tannen
grow
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd
rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought
below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine
shocks
Of eddying storms; yet springs the
trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and
frame
Are worthy of the mountains from
whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree;—the mind may
grow the same.

XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep
root
Of life and sufferance make its firm
abode
The bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest
load,
And the wolf dies in silence,—not be-
stow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler
clay
May temper it to bear,—it is but for a
day.

XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is de-
stroy'd,
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends:—Some, with hope replenish'd
and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came—with like
intent,
And weave their web again; some,
bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere
their time,
And perish with the reed on which they
leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or
crime,
According as their souls were form'd to
sink or climb.

XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's
sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness
imbued;
And slight withal may be the things
which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it
would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or
spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which
shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we
are darkly bound;

XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can
trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the
mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can
efface
The blight and blackening which it
leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, un-
design'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to
view
The spectres whom no exorcism can
bind,—
The cold, the changed, perchance the
dead—
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too
many! yet how few!

But my soul wanders; I demand it
back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er
a land
Which was the mightiest in its old com-
mand,
And is the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly
hand;
Wherein were cast the heroic and the
free,
The beautiful, the brave, the lords of earth
and sea,

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men
of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, the
home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can
decree;

Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot
be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night;
Sunset divides the sky with her; a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine
height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is
free
From clouds, but of all colours seems
to be,—
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
Where the Day joins the past Eternity,
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's
crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of
the blest!

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but
still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and re-
mains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian
hill,
As Day and Night contending were,
until
Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently
flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues
instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and
glass'd within it glows,

XXIX

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which,
from afar,
Comes down upon the waters; all its
hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler shadow
strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting
day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang
imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away—
The last still loveliest,—till—'tis gone—
and all is gray.

XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua;—rear'd in
air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes:
Watering the tree which bears his lady's
name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself
to fame.

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he
died;
The mountain-village where his latter
days
Went down the vale of years; and 'tis
their pride—
An honest pride—and let it be their
praise,
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre; both
plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental
fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems
made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes
decay'd
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's
shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd,
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient
holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and
flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook,
whereby,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering
hours
With a calm languor, which, though to
the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.
If from society we learn to live,
'Tis solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone—man with his God
must strive:

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and
seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest
day,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV

Ferrara! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
Hark to his strain! and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earn'd Torquato's fame,
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell:
The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scatter'd the clouds away; and on that name attend

XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time; while thine
Would rot in its oblivion—in the sink
Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing—but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn:
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn:

XXXVIII

Thou! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty:
He! with a glory round his furrow'd brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow
No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire!

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade!
'twas his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows,—but to miss.
Oh, victor unsurpass'd in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a mind like thine? though all in one
Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a sun.

XL

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan father's Comedy Divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves;
Nor was the ominous element unjust,
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow:
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
Whate'er it strikes;—yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII

Italia! oh Italia! thou who hast
 The fatal gift of beauty, which became
 A funeral dower of present woes and
 past,
 On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd
 by shame,
 And annals graved in characters of
 flame.
 Oh, God! that thou wert in thy naked-
 ness
 Less lovely or more powerful, and
 couldst claim
 Thy right, and awe the robbers back,
 who press
 To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of
 thy distress;

XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal; or, less
 desired,
 Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord
 For thy destructive charms; then, still
 untired,
 Would not be seen the armed torrents
 pour'd
 Down the deep Alps; nor would the
 hostile horde
 Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
 Quaff blood and water; nor the stran-
 ger's sword
 Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
 Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of
 friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path
 of him,
 The Roman friend of Rome's least-
 mortal mind,
 The friend of Tully: as my bark did
 skim
 The bright blue waters with a fanning
 wind,
 Came Megara before me, and behind
 Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
 And Corinth on the left; I lay re-
 clined
 Along the prow, and saw all these unite
 In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate
 sight;

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but
 uprear'd
 Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd
 site,
 Which only make more mourn'd and
 more endear'd
 The few last rays of their far-scatter'd
 light,
 And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd
 might.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The Roman saw these tombs in his own
 age,
 These sepulchres of cities, which excite
 Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such
 pilgrimage.

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on
 mine
 His country's ruin added to the mass
 Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their
 decline,
 And I in desolation: all that *was*
 Of then destruction *is*; and now, alas!
 Rome—Rome imperial, bows her to the
 storm,
 In the same dust and blackness, and we
 pass
 The skeleton of her Titanic form,
 Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still
 are warm.

XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land
 Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from
 side to side;
 Mother of Arts! as once of arms; thy
 hand
 Was then our guardian, and is still our
 guide;
 Parent of our religion! whom the wide
 Nations have knelt to for the keys of
 heaven!
 Europe, repentant of her parricide,
 Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward
 driven,
 Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be for-
 given.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
 Where the Etrurian Athens claims and
 keeps
 A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
 Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
 Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty
 leaps
 To laughing life, with her redundant
 horn.
 Along the banks where smiling Arno
 sweeps
 Was modern Luxury of Commerce
 born,
 And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a
 new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone,
 and fills
 The air around with beauty; we inhale
 The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld,
 instills
 Part of its immortality; the veil

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

Of heaven is half undrawn; within the
 Ve stand, and in that form and face be-
 hold
 What Mind can make, when Nature's
 self would fail;
 And to the fond idolaters of old
 Envy the innate flash which such a soul
 could mould:

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not
 where,
 Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the
 heart
 Reels with its fulness; there—for ever
 there—
 Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
 We stand as captives, and would not
 depart.
 Away!—there need no words nor terms
 precise,
 The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
 Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have
 eyes:
 Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dar-
 dan Shepherd's prize.

LI

Appear'st thou not to Paris in this
 guise?
 Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
 In all thy perfect Goddess-ship, when lies
 Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord
 of War?
 And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
 Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
 Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy
 lips are
 With lava kisses melting while they burn,
 Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth,
 as from an urn?

LII

Glowing, and circumfused in speech-
 less love
 Their full divinity inadequate
 That feeling to express, or to improve,
 The gods become as mortals, and man's
 fate
 Has moments like their brightest; but
 the weight
 Of earth recoils upon us;—let it go!
 We can recall such visions, and create,
 From what has been, or might be, things
 which grow
 Into thy statue's form, and look like gods
 below.

LIII

I leave to learned fingers and wise
 hands,
 The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
 How well his connoisseurship under-
 stands

The graceful bend, and the voluptuous
 swell:
 Let these describe the undescribable:
 I would not their vile breath should
 crisp the stream
 Wherein that image shall for ever dwell;
 The unruffled mirror of the loveliest
 dream
 That ever left the sky on the deep soul to
 beam.

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
 Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
 Even in itself an immortality,
 Though there were nothing save the
 past, and this,
 The particle of those sublimities
 Which have relapsed to chaos: here
 repose
 Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
 The starry Galileo, with his woes;
 Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to
 whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the
 elements,
 Might furnish forth creation:—Italy!
 Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten
 thousand rents
 Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
 And hath denied, to every other sky,
 Spirits which soar from ruin: thy decay
 Is still impregnate with divinity,
 Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
 Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three—
 Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less
 than they,
 The Bard of Prose, creative spirit! he
 Of the Hundred Tales of love—where
 did they lay
 Their bones, distinguish'd from our
 common clay
 In death as life? Are they resolved to
 dust,
 And have their country's marbles nought
 to say?
 Could not her quarries furnish forth one
 bust?
 Did they not to her breast their filial earth
 entrust?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
 Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding
 shore:
 Thy factions, in their worse than civil
 war,
 Proscribed the bard whose name for
 evermore

CANTO IV]

Their children's children would in vain
adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow su-
preinely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled—
not thine own.

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth be-
queath'd
His dust,—and lies it not her great
among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem
breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren
tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are
song,
The poetry of speech? No;—even his
tomb
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's
wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find
room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told
for *whom*!

And Santa Croce wants their mighty
dust;
Yet for this want more noted, as of
yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus'
bust,
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her
more:
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire! honour'd
sleeps
The immortal exile;—Arqua, too, her
store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and
keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd
dead and weeps.

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones?
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? the momentary
dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars,
infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps
the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the
Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent
tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the
princely head.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart
and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely
shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sis-
ter vies;
There be more marvels yet—but not for
mine;
For I have been accustom'd to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the
fields,
Than Art in galleries; though a work
divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon
which it wields

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at
home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike
wiles
Come back before me, as his skill be-
guiles
The host between the mountains and the
shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing
files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their
gore,
Reek through the sultry plain, with legions
scatter'd o'er,

LXIII

Liketo a forest fell'd by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this
day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion
blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the
fray,
An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his
feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those
who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding-
sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring
nations meet!

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to
mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's
law,
In them suspended, reck'd not of the
awe

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

Which reigns when mountains tremble,
and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and
withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and
bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's
dread hath no words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle
plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the
slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook
hath ta'en—
A little rill of scanty stream and bed—
A name of blood from that day's san-
guine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turn'd the un-
willing waters red.

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest
wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and
lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou
dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-
white steer
Grazes; the purest god of gentle waters!
And most serene of aspect, and most
clear;
Surely that stream was unprofaned by
slaughters,
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest
daughters!

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it
leaps
The finny darter with the glittering
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy
While, chance, some scatter'd water-
lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells
its bubbling tales.

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 'tis his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,

If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry
dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism,—'tis to him ye
must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters!—from the headlong
height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the
abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and
hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the
sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks
of jet
That guard the gulf around, in pitiless
horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and
thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which
round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald:—how pro-
found
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious
bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward
worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms
a fearful vent!

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on,
and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by
the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the
vale:—Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread,—a match-
less cataract,

LXXII

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering
morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, un-
worn

CANTO IV]

Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams
unshorn:

Resembling, 'mid the torture of the
scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable
mien.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which—had I not be-
fore
Gazed on their mightier parents, where
the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where
roar
The thundering Lauwine—might be
worshipp'd more;
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the
hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far
and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of
fear,

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old
name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for
fame,
For still they soared unutterably high:
I've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height, dis-
play'd
Not now in snow, which asks the lyric
Roman's aid

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the
plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to
break,
And on the curl hangs pausing: not in
vain
May he, who will, his recollections rake,
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhor'd
Too much, to conquer for the poet's
sake,
The drill'd dull lesson, forced down
word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to
record

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which
turn'd
My sickening memory; and, though
Time hath taught

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

My mind to meditate what then it
learn'd,
Yet such the fix'd inveteracy wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That, with the freshness wearing out
before
My mind could relish what it might have
sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still
abhor.

LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse:
Although no deeper Moralists rehearse
Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience
pierce,
Awakening without wounding the
touch'd heart,
Yet fare thee well—upon Soracte's ridge
we part.

LXXVIII

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to
thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and con-
trol
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come
and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your
way
O'er steps of broken thrones and tem-
ples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless
woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes
now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle
her distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War,
Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's
pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs
ride,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far
and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a
site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the
void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar
light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is
doubly night?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt
and wrap
All round us: we but feel our way to
err:
The ocean hath its chart, the stars their
map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her
ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert, where we
steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we
clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is
clear—
When but some false mirage of ruin rises
near.

LXXXII

Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the
day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge
surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame
away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page!—but these
shall be
Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when
Rome was free!

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on For-
tune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst sub-
due
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst
pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap
the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles
flew
O'er prostrate Asia;—thou, who with
thy frown
Annihilated senates—Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay
down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly
crown—

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath—couldst thou
divine
To what would one day dwindle that
which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should
thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer—she who
veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and
display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings—Oh! she who was Al-
mighty hail'd!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,
The sage of usurpers, Cromwell!—he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the
throne
Down to a block—immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
And famous through all ages! but be-
neath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier,
yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose for-
mer course
Had all but crown'd him, on the self-
same day
Deposed him gently from his throne of
force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding
clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame
and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each
arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the
tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different
were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in
The austere form of naked majesty,
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins'
din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Caesar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he
die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye
been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of
a scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of
Rome!
She-wolf! whose brazen-imag'd dugs
impart
The milk of conquest yet within the
dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest:—Mother of the mighty
heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from
thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal
dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning—
dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond
charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are
dead—
The men of iron: and the world hath
rear'd
Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd,
And fought and conquer'd, and the
same course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could, the same supremacy have
near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But, vanquish'd by himself, to his own
slaves a slave—

XC

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's
mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which re-
deem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he
beam'd,

And came—and saw—and conquer'd!
But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down
to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart, which never seem'd
to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness—
vanity,
Coquettish in ambition, still he aim'd—
At what? can he avouch, or answer what
he claim'd?

XCII

And would be all or nothing—nor could
wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread: For *this* the con-
queror rears
The arch of triumph and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have
flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rain-
bow, God!

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves
the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's fals-
est scale;
Opinion an omnipotence,—whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until
right
And wrong are accidents, and men
grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become
too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and
earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so
die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who
wage
War for their chains, and rather than
be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the
same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest
between
Man and his Maker—but of things
allow'd,
Averr'd, and known, and daily, hourly
seen—
The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd,
And the intent of tyranny avow'd,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are
grown
The apes of him who humbled once the
proud,
And shook them from their slumbers
on the throne:
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm
had done.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamant wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and then,
The still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the ring,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,

And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'er-thrown;—
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid?—A woman's grave.

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's, or more—a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honoured—and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites—early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illumine
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,
 Charms, kindred, children—with the
 silver gray
 On her long tresses, which might yet re-
 call,
 It may be, still a something of the day
 When they were braided, and her proud
 array
 And lovely form were envied, praised,
 and eyed
 By Rome—But whither would Conjec-
 ture stray?
 Thus much alone we know—Metella
 died,
 The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his
 love or pride!

CIV

I know not why—but standing thus by
 thee
 It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
 Thou Tomb! and other days come back
 on me
 With recollected music, though the tone
 Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy
 groan
 Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
 Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
 Till I had bodied, forth the heated mind,
 Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin
 leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er
 the rocks,
 Built me a little bark of hope, once more
 To battle with the ocean and the shocks
 Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless
 roar
 Which rushes on the solitary shore
 Where all lies founder'd that was ever
 dear:
 But could I gather from the wave-worn
 store
 Enough for my rude boat, where should
 I steer?
 There woe's no home, nor hope, nor life,
 save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on! their har-
 mony
 Shall henceforth be my music, and the
 night
 The sound shall temper with the owlets'
 cry,
 As I now hear them, in the fading light
 Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native
 site,
 Answering each other on the Palatine,
 With their large eyes, all glistening gray
 and bright,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And sailing pinions.—Upon such a
 shrine
 What are our petty griefs?—let me not
 number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower
 grown,
 Matted and mass'd together, hillocks
 heap'd
 On what were chambers, arch crush'd,
 column strown
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and
 frescos steep'd
 In subterranean damp, where the owl
 peep'd,
 Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths,
 or halls?
 Pronounce who can; for all that Learn-
 ing reap'd
 From her research hath been, that these
 are walls—
 Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the
 mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
 First Freedom, and then Glory—when
 that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism
 at last.
 And History, with all her volumes vast,
 Hath but *one* page,—'tis better writ-
 ten here
 Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus
 amass'd
 All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
 Heart, soul, could seek, tongue ask—
 Away with words! draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep,—
 for here
 There is such matter for all feeling:—
 Man!
 Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
 Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
 This mountain, whose obliterated plan
 The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
 Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
 Till the sun's rays with added flame were
 fill'd!
 Where are its golden roofs? where those
 who dared to build?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
 Thou nameless column with the buried
 base!
 What are the laurels of the Caesar's
 brow?
 Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-
 place.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

Whose arch or pillar meets me in the
face,
Titus or Trajan's? No—'tis that of
Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth dis-
place
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes
slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of
Rome,
And looking to the stars: they had con-
tain'd
A spirit which with these would find a
home,
The last of those who o'er the whole
earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sus-
tain'd,
But yielded back his conquests:—he
was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serene-
ly wore
His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's
name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high
place
Where Rome embraced her heroes?
where the steep
Tarpeian? fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's
Leap
Cured all ambition. Did the conquerors
heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field
below,
A thousand years of silenced factions
sleep—
The Forum, where the immortal accents
glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes—burns
with Cicero!

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and
blood:
Here a proud people's passions were
exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer
fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face
been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trode on the trembling senate's slavish
mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prosti-
tutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to
thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth
a leaf
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
The forum's champion, and the people's
chief—
Her new-born Numa thou—with reign,
alas! too brief.

CXV

Egeria! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place
so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary
there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly
bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are
sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring with years
unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the
place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more
erases
Art's works; nor must the delicate
waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble—bubb'ing from the
base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er—and round—fern, flowers,
and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms,
through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the
bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye
pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their
class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their
dyes,
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue
eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven seems
* colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted
cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic
meeting
With her most starry canopy, and seat-
ing
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the
greeting
Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle!

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his
replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in
sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could
thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the
dart—
The dull satiety which all destroys—
And root from out the soul the deadly
weed which cloy's?

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of
haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the
eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but
agonies,
And trees whose gums are poisons; such
the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as
Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly
pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our
wants.

CXXI

Oh, Love! no habitant of earth thou
art—
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,—
A faith whose martyrs are the broken
heart,—
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled
heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image
given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul—parch'd,
wearied, wrung, and riven.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation:—where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul
hath seiz'd?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which
we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as
men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the
pen,
And overpowers the page where it would
bloom again?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy
—but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm un-
winds
Which robbed our idols, and we see too
sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out
the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-
sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize—wealthiest
when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp
away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon, unslaked
the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought
at first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis
the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the
worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where van-
ishes the flame.

CXXV

Few—none—find what they love or
could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the
strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies—but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the
dust we all have trod.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature: 'tis not in
The harmony of things,—this hard de-
cree,
This unradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting
tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and
branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on
men like dew—
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes
we see,
And worse, the woes we see not—which
throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches
ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought—our last and only
place
Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be
mine:
Though from our birth the faculty
divine
Is chain'd and tortured—cabin'd,
cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth
should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will
couch the blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her
line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one
dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams
shine
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here
to illumine
This long-explored but still exhaustless
mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies
assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words, and speak to
ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous
monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is
given
Unto the things of earth, which Time
hath bent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath
leant

His hand, but broke his scythe, there is
a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are
its dower.

CXXX

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the corrector where our judg-
ments err,
The test of truth, love—sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists—from thy
thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer—
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave
of thee a gift:

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast
made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are
mine,
Ruins of years, though few, yet full of
fate:
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the
hate
Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not
have worn
This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they*
not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human
wrong
Left the unbalanced scale. great Neme-
sis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee hom-
age long—
Thou who didst call the Furies from the

And round Orestes bade them howl and
hiss
For that unnatural retribution—just,
Had it but been from hands less near—
in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the
dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake!
thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurr'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the
wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been con-
ferr'd
With a just weapon, it had flow'd un-
bound;

CANTO IV]

But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
 To thee I do devote it—*thou* shalt take
 The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
 Which if I have not taken for the sake—
 But let that pass—I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
 I shrink from what is suffer'd: let him speak
 Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
 Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
 But in this page a record will I seek.
 Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
 Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
 The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
 And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness.—Have I not—
 Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!
 Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
 Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
 Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
 Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
 And only not to desperation driven,
 Because not altogether of such clay
 As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
 Have I not seen what human things could do?
 From the loud roar of foaming calumny
 To the small whisper of the aspaltry few,
 And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
 The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
 Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
 And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
 Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
 And my frame perish even in conquering pain;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

But there is that within me which shall tire
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
 Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
 Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
 Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread power!
 Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
 Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
 With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
 Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
 Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
 Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
 That we become a part of what has been,
 And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
 In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
 As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.
 And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
 Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
 And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not?
 What matters where we fall to fill the maws
 Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot?
 Both are but theatres—where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far
away;
—He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube
lay,
There were his young barbarians all at
play,
There was their Dacian mother—he,
their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he
expire
And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut
your ire!

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her
bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked
the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a moun-
tain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame
or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a
crowd,
My voice sounds much—and fall the
stars' faint rays
On the arena void—seats crush'd—
walls bow'd—
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes
strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been
rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have
appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but
clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all—years—
man—have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to
climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses
there;
When the stars twinkle through the
loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along
the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls
wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's
head;

When the light shines serene but doth
not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their
dust ye tread.

CXLV

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall
stand;
'When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall
fall;
'And when Rome falls—the World.'
From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty
wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things
are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's
skill,
The World, the same wide den—of thieves,
or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime—
Shrine of all saints and temple of all
gods,
From Jove to Jesus—spared and blest
by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee,
and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes—
glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and
tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee—sanctuary and home
Of art and piety—Pantheon!—pride of
Rome!

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts!
Despoil'd yet perfect, with thy circle
spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts—
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to
those
Who worship, here are altars for their
beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms, whose busts
around them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear
light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look
again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my
sight—
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:

CANTO IV]

It is not so; I see them full and plain—
An old man, and a female young and
fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose
vein
The blood is nectar:—but what doth
she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom
white and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of
young life,
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart
we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the
wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy per-
ceives
Man knows not, when from out its
cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its
leaves—
What may the fruit be yet? I know not—
Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the
food,
The milk of his own gift: it is her
sire
To whom she renders back the debt of
blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not
expire
While in those warm and lovely veins
the fire
Of health and holy feeling can pro-
vide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream
rises higher
Than Egypt's river: from that gentle
side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's
realm holds no such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in
this
Reverse of her decree, than in the
abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds:—Oh,
holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way
shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its
source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the
universe.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CLII

Turn to the mole which Hadrian rear'd
on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far
Nile's
Enormous model, doom'd the artist's
toils
To build for giants, and for his vain
earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome:
How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung
from such a birth!

CLIII

But lo! the dome—the vast and won-
drous dome,
To which Diana's marvel was a cell—
Christ's mighty shrine above his mar-
tyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle;—
Its columns strew the wilderness, and
dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs
swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have
survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Mos-
lem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to
thee—
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour
piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all
are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee
not;
And why? It is not lessen'd; but thy
mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so de-
fined,
See thy God face to face, as thou dost
now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his
brow.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

CLVI

Thou movest, but increasing with the
advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which
still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to
harmonise—
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting—shrines
where flame
The lamps of gold—and haughty dome
which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures,
though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the
clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou
must break,
To separate contemplation, the great
whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make
That ask the eye—so here condense thy
soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by
heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not
dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault—but thine: Our out-
ward sense
Is but of gradual grasp—and as it is
That what we have of feeling most in-
tense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so
this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the
great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus
dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contem-
plate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is
more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would
adore
The worship of the place, or the mere
praise
Of art and its great masters, who could
raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought
could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays

Its depth, and thence may draw the
mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great
conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocöon's torture dignifying pain—
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending:
—Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling
strain
And gripe, and deepening of the dra-
gon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long en-
venom'd chain
Rivets the living links,—the enormous
asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on
gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light—
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and
brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot—the
arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his
eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty, flash their full lightnings
by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form—a dream of
Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose
breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above,
And madden'd in that vision—are ex-
prest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly
mood,
When each conception was a heavenly
guest—
A ray of immortality—and stood
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a
god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from
Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble bath array'd
With an eternal glory—which, if made
By human hands, is not of human
thought;

CANTO IV]

And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor
laid
One ringlet in the dust—nor hath it
caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame
with which 'twas wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the
past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries
long.
He is no more—these breathings are his
last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing
fast,
And he himself as nothing:—if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be
class'd
With forms which live and suffer—let
that pass—
His shadow fades away into Destruction's
mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life,
and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phan-
toms; and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever
glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they dis-
tract the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the
frame
Shall be resolved to something less than
this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of
fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle
name
We never more shall hear,—but never
more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made
the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels of the heart—the heart
whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice pro-
ceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread
sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

With some deep and immedicable
wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the
rending ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the
chief
Seems royal still, though with her head
discrown'd,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal
grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast
yields no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where
art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou
dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay
low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still
bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever: with
thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it
seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it
be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall
weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy,
cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had
pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort—vainly wert thou
wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the
dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment
made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is
laid,
The love of millions! How we did in-
trust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly
deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and
bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose
promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherd's eyes:—'twas but
a meteor beam'd.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

CLXXXI

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps
well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the
tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath
rung
Its knell in princely ears, till the o'er-
stung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the
strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns,
and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a
weight
Within the opposing scale, which crushes
soon or late,—

CLXXXII

These might have been her destiny; but
no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a
foe;
But now a bride and mother—and now
there!
How many ties did that stern moment
tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's
breast
Is link'd the electric chain of that de-
spair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's,
and oppress
The land which loved thee so that none
could love thee best.

CLXXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which
tears
The oak from his foundation, and which
spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its form against the skies, reluctant
spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And calm as cherish'd hate, its surface
wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can
shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps
the snake.

CLXXXIV

And near, Albano's scarce divided
waves
Shine from a sister valley;—and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean
laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic
war,

'Arms and the man,' whose re-ascend-
ing star
Rose o'er an empire:—but beneath thy
right
Tully reposed from Rome;—and where
yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the
sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary
bard's delight.

CLXXXV

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is
won,
And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and
me,
And from the Alban Mount we now
behold
Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which
when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark
Euxine roll'd

CLXXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades: long
years—
Long, though not very many—since
have done
Their work on both; some suffering and
some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath
run;
We have had our reward, and it is
here,—
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the
sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy: almost as
dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is
clear.

CLXXXVII

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-
place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
With them to converse can rarely
be our lot.

CLXXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:

CANTO IV]

I love not Man the less, but Nature
 more,
 From these our interviews, in which I
 steal
 From all I may be, or have been before,
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all
 conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue
 Ocean—roll!
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in
 vain;
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his
 control
 Stops with the shore; upon the watery
 plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth
 remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When, for a moment, like a drop of
 rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
 groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd,
 and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy
 fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost
 arise
 And shake him from thee; the vile
 strength he wields
 For earth's destruction thou dost all de-
 pise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the
 skies,
 And send'st him, shivering in thy play-
 ful spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply
 lies
 His petty hope in some near port or
 bay,
 And dashest him again to earth:—there
 let him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike
 the walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations
 quake,
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs
 make
 Their clay creator the vain title take
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy
 flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
 mar
 Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of
 Trafalgar.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all
 save thee—
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what
 are they?
 Thy waters wash'd them power while
 they were free,
 And many a tyrant since; their shores
 obey
 The stranger, slave, or savage; their
 decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so
 thou;—
 Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves'
 play,
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure
 brow:
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou
 rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Al-
 mighty's form
 Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,—
 Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or
 storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
 Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and
 sublime,
 The image of eternity, the throne
 Of the Invisible; even from out thy
 slime
 The monsters of the deep are made;
 each zone
 Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread,
 fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my
 joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to
 be
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from
 a boy
 I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to
 me
 Were a delight; and if the freshening
 sea
 Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing
 fear,
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do
 here.

CLXXXV

My task is done, my song hath ceased,
 my theme
 Has died into an echo; it is fit
 The spell should break of this protracted
 dream.
 The torch shall be extinguish'd which
 hath lit

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

[CANTO IV

My midnight lamp—and what is writ,
is writ;
Would it were worthier! but I am not
now
That which I have been—and my visions
flit
Less palpably before me—and the
glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering,
faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath
been—

A sound which makes us linger;—yet—
farewell!
Yel who have traced the Pilgrim to the
scene
Which is his last, if in your memories
dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye
swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-
shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the
pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of
his strain.

TALES THE GIAOUR

A FRAGMENT OF A TURKISH TALE

'One fatal remembrance—one sorrow that throws
its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes—
To which Life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm—and affliction no sting.'—MOORE.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

AS A SLIGHT BUT MOST SINCERE TOKEN OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS GENIUS, RESPECT FOR
HIS CHARACTER, AND GRATITUDE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP,

THIS PRODUCTION IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

BYRON.

LONDON, *May*, 1813.

ADVERTISEMENT

The tale which these disjointed fragments present is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly; either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the 'olden time,' or because the Christians have better fortune, or less enterprise.

The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion. The desertion of the Mainotes, on being refused the plunder of Misitra, led to the abandonment of that enterprise, and to the desolation of the Morea; during which the cruelty exercised on all sides was unparalleled even in the annals of the faithful.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain; 5
When shall such hero live again?

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,

Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the

lend to loneliness delight.
There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the eastern wave: 15
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,

Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That wakes and wafts the odours there!
For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale, 21
Sultana of the Nightingale,

The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blossoms blushing to her lover's tale: 25
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,
Far from the winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by nature given 30
In softest incense back to heaven;
And grateful yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that love might
share, 35

And many a grotto, meant for rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar 40
Is heard, and seen the evening star;
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turn to groans his roundelay. 45
Strange—that where Nature loved to
trace,

As if for gods, a dwelling-place,
And every charm and grace hath mix'd
Within the paradise she fix'd,
There man, enamour'd of distress, 50
Should mar it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one laborious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To bloom along the fairy land, 55
But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him—but to spare!
Strange—that where all is peace beside,
There passion riots in her pride,
And lust and rapine wildly reign 60
To darken o'er the fair domain.
It is as though the fiends prevail'd
Against the seraphs they assail'd,
And, fix'd on heavenly thrones, should
dwell
The freed inheritors of hell; 65
So soft the scene, so form'd for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness, 70
The last of danger and distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,)
And mark'd the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there, 75
The fix'd yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,

And—but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where cold Obstruction's apathy 81
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone, 85
Some moments, ay, one treacherous
hour,

He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
The first, last look by death reveal'd!
Such is the aspect of this shore; 90
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting
breath; 95
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling pass'd
away! 100

Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly
birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its
cherish'd earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-
cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be, 106
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you
lave,— 110

Oh servile offspring of the free,
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own; 115
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear, 120
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won, 125
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid, 129
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!

THE GIAOUR

There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
 The graves of those that cannot die!
 'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace, 136
 Each step from splendour to disgrace;
 Enough—no foreign foe could quell
 Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
 Yes! Self-abasement paved the way 140
 To villain-bonds and despot sway.
 What can he tell who treads thy shore?
 No legend of thine olden time,
 No theme on which the Muse might soar
 High as thine own in days of yore, 145
 When man was worthy of thy clime.
 The hearts within thy valleys bred,
 The fiery souls that might have led
 Thy sons to deeds sublime,
 Now crawl from cradle to the grave, 150
 Slaves—nay, the bondsmen of a slave,
 And callous, save to crime;
 Stain'd with each evil that pollutes
 Mankind, where least above the brutes;
 Without even savage virtue blest, 155
 Without one free or valiant breast,
 Still to the neighbouring ports they waft
 Proverbial wiles and ancient craft;
 In this the subtle Greek is found,
 For this, and this alone, renown'd. 160
 In vain might Liberty invoke
 The spirit to its bondage broke,
 Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
 No more her sorrows I bewail,
 Yet this will be a mournful tale, 165
 And they who listen may believe,
 Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
 The shadows of the rocks advancing
 Start on the fisher's eye like boat 170
 Of island-pirate or Mainote;
 And fearful for his light calque,
 He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
 Though worn and weary with his toil,
 And cumber'd with his scaly spoil, 175
 Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
 Till Port Leone's safer shore
 Receives him by the lovely light
 That best becomes an Eastern night.

Who thundering comes on blackest
 steed, 180
 With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed?
 Beneath the clattering iron's sound
 The cavern'd echoes wake around
 In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
 The foam that streaks the courser's side
 Seems gather'd from the ocean-tide: 186
 Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
 There's none within his rider's breast;
 And though to-morrow's tempest lower,
 'Tis calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!
 I know thee not, I loathe thy race, 191
 But in thy lineaments I trace
 What Time shall strengthen, not efface:

Though young and pale, that sallow front
 Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt; 195
 Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
 As meteor-like thou glidest by,
 Right well I view and deem thee one
 Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On—on he hasten'd, and he drew 200
 My gaze of wonder as he flew:
 Though like a demon of the night
 He pass'd, and vanish'd from my sight,
 His aspect and his air impress'd
 A troubled memory on my breast, 205
 And long upon my startled ear
 Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
 He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
 That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
 He winds around; he hurries by; 210
 The rock relieves him from mine eye;
 For well I ween unwelcome he
 Whose glance is fix'd on those that flee;
 And not a star but shines too bright
 On him who takes such timeless flight.
 He wound along; but ere he pass'd, 216
 One glance he snatch'd, as if his last,
 A moment check'd his wheeling steed,
 A moment breathed him from his speed,
 A moment on his stirrup stood— 220
 Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
 The crescent glimmers on the hill,
 The Mosque's high lamps are quivering
 still:
 Though too remote for sound to wake
 In echoes of the far tophaike, 225
 The flashes of each joyous peal
 Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal.
 To-night, set Rhamazani's sun;
 To-night, the Bairam feast's begun;
 To-night—but who and what art thou 230
 Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
 And what are these to thine or thee,
 That thou shouldst either pause or flee?

He stood—some dread was on his
 face,
 Soon Hatred settled in its place: 235
 It rose not with the reddening flush
 Of transient Anger's hasty blush,
 But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
 Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
 His brow was bent, his eye was glazed; 240
 He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
 And sternly shook his hand on high,
 As doubting to return or fly;
 Impatient of his flight delay'd,
 Here loud his raven charger neigh'd—
 Down glanced that hand, and grasp'd his
 blade; 246
 That sound had burst his waking dream,
 As Slumber starts at owl's scream,
 The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
 Away, away, for life he rides: 250
 Swift as the hurl'd on high jerréed
 Springs to the touch his startled steed:

THE GIAOUR

The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen 255
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'Twas but an instant he restrain'd
That fiery barb so sternly rein'd;
'Twas but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued; 260
But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seem'd to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears, 265
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt *he* then, at once oppress
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which ponder'd o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date! 270
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
Thethought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend 275
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone?
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent 280
To turn a palace to a tomb;
He came, he went, like the simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death— 285
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is
fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!

The steed is vanish'd from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely spider's thin gray pall 290
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The bat builds in his haram bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's
brim, 295
With baffled thirst, and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble
bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are
spread.

'Twas sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day, 300
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o'er the ground.
'Twas sweet, when cloudless stars were
bright, 305
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan's Childhood play'd
Around the verge of that cascade;

And oft upon his mother's breast 310
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan's Youth along
Its bank been soothed by Beauty's song;
And softer seem'd each melting tone
Of Music mingled with its own. 315
But ne'er shall Hassan's Age repose
Along the brink at twilight's close:
The stream that fill'd that font is fled—
The blood that warm'd his heart is
shed!

And here no more shall human voice
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice. 321
The last sad note that swell'd the gale
Was woman's wildest funeral wail:
That quench'd in silence, all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind
is shrill: 325
Though raves the gust, and floods the
rain,

No hand shall close its clasp again.
On desert sands 'twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,
So here the very voice of Grief 330
Might wake an Echo like relief—
At least 'twould say, 'All are not
gone;

There lingers Life, though but in one'—
For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which Solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet Decay 336
Hath slowly work'd her cankering
way—

But gloom is gather'd o'er the gate,
Nor there the Fakir's self will wait;
Nor there will wandering Dervise stay.
For bounty cheers not his delay; 341
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred 'bread and salt.'
Alike must Wealth and Poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by, 345
For Courtesy and Pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is Desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from
labour, 350
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's
sabre!

I hear the sound of coming feet,
But not a voice mine ear to greet;
More near—each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathed ataghan; 355
The foremost of the band is seen
An Emir by his garb of green:
'Ho! who art thou?'—'This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.'
'The burthen ye so gently bear 360
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious
freight—
My humble bark would gladly wait.'

THE GIAOUR

'Thous speakest sooth: thy skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore; 365
Nay, leave the sail still flar'd, and ply
The nearest oar that's scatter'd by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channell'd waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task—so—bravely done,
Our course has been right swiftly run; 371
Yet 'tis the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of—

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank; 375
I watch'd it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirr'd it more,—'twas but the beam
That checker'd o'er the living stream:
I gaz'd, till vanishing from view, 380
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd the
sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep, 385
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

As rising on its purple wing
The insect queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer 390
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye; 395
So Beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild;
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betray'd, 400
Woe waits the insect and the maid;
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play, and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught, 405
For every touch that woo'd its stay
Hath brush'd its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'Tis left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast,
Ah! where shall either victim rest? 411
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or Beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bow? 415
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim 420
Except an erring sister's shame.

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire;
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly search'd by thousand throes, 426
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows,
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain, 430
Gives but one pang and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain:
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, un doom'd for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath, 437
Around it flame, within it death!

Black Hassan from the Haram flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes;
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell? 445
That tale can only Hassan tell:
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's last sun was set,
And flashing from each minaret 450
Millions of lamps proclaim'd the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.
'Twas then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly search'd in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage 455
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wrong'd him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deem'd;
But still so fond, so fair she seem'd, 460
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave:
And on that eve had gone to mosque,
And thence to feast in his kiosk.
Such is the tale his Nubians tell, 465
Who did not watch their charge too well;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed 470
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the Gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well; 475
As large, as languishingly dark,
But Soul beam'd forth in every spark
That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschid. 479
Yea, *Soul*, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,

By Alla! I would answer nay;
 Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
 Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
 With Paradise within my view, 485
 And all his Houris beckoning through.
 Oh! who young Leila's glance could read
 And keep that portion of his creed
 Which saith that woman is but dust,
 A soulless toy for tyrant's lust? 490
 On her might Mufis gaze, and own
 That through her eye the Immortal shone;
 On her fair cheek's unfading hue
 The young pomegranate's blossoms strew
 Their bloom in blushes ever new; 495
 Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
 When left to roll its folds below,
 As midst her handmaids in the hall
 She stood superior to them all,
 Hath swept the marble where her feet 500
 Gleam'd whiter than the mountain sleet
 Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
 It fell, and caught one stain of earth.
 The cygnet nobly walks the water;
 So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
 The loveliest bird of Frangestan! 506
 As rears her crest the ruffled Swan,
 And spurns the waves with wings of pride,
 When pass the steps of stranger man
 Along the banks that bound her tide;
 Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck:— 511
 Thus arm'd with beauty would she check
 Intrusion's glance, till Folly's gaze
 Shrank from the charms it meant to praise.
 Thus high and graceful was her gait; 515
 Her heart as tender to her mate;
 Her mate—stern Hassan, who was he?
 Alas! that name was not for thee!

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
 With twenty vassals in his train, 520
 Each arm'd, as best becomes a man,
 With arquebuss and ataghan;
 The chief before, as deck'd for war,
 Bears in his belt the scimitar
 Stain'd with the best of Arnaut blood, 525
 When in the pass the rebels stood,
 And few return'd to tell the tale
 Of what befell in Parne's vale.
 The pistols which his girdle bore
 Were those that once a pasha wore, 530
 Which still, though gemm'd and boss'd
 with gold,
 Even robbers tremble to behold.
 'Tis said he goes to woo a bride
 More true than her who left his side;
 The faithless slave that broke her bower,
 And, worse than faithless, for a Giaour!

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
 And sparkle in the fountain rill, 538
 Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
 Draw blessings from the mountaineer:

Here may the loitering merchant Greek
 Find that repose 'twere vain to seek
 In cities lodged too near his lord,
 And trembling for his secret hoard—
 Here may he rest where none can see, 545
 In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
 And with forbidden wine may stain
 The bowl a Moslem must not drain.

The foremost Tartar's in the gap
 Conspicuous by his yellow cap; 550
 The rest in lengthening line the while
 Wind slowly through the long defile:
 Above, the mountain rears a peak,
 Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
 And theirs may be a feast to-night, 555
 Shall tempt them down ere morrow's
 light;
 Beneath, a river's wintry stream
 Has shrunk before the summer beam,
 And left a channel bleak and bare,
 Save shrubs that spring to perish there;
 Each side the midway path there lay 561
 Small broken crags of granite gray,
 By time, or mountain lightning, riven
 From summits clad in mists of heaven;
 For where is he that hath beheld 565
 The peak of Liakura unveil'd?

They reach the grove of pine at last;
 'Bismillah! now the peril 's past;
 For yonder view the opening plain,
 And there we'll prick our steeds amain.'
 The Chiaus spake, and as he said, 571
 A bullet whistles o'er his head;
 The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
 Scarce had they time to check the rein,
 Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
 But three shall never mount again: 576
 Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
 The dying ask revenge in vain.
 With steel unsheath'd, and carbine bent,
 Some o'er their courser's harness leant,
 Half shelter'd by the steed; 581
 Some fly behind the nearest rock,
 And there await the coming shock,
 Nor tamely stand to bleed
 Beneath the shaft of foes unseen, 585
 Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
 Stern Hassan only from his horse
 Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
 Till fiery flashes in the van
 Proclaim too sure the robber-clan 590
 Have well secured the only way
 Could now avail the promised prey;
 Then curl'd his very beard with ire,
 And glared his eye with fiercer fire;
 'Though far and near the bullets hiss, 595
 I've scaped a bloodier hour than this.'
 And now the foe their covert quit,
 And call his vassals to submit;
 But Hassan's frown and furious word
 Are dreaded more than hostile sword, 600

THE GIAOUR

Nor of his little band a man
 Resign'd carbine or ataghan,
 Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!
 In fuller sight, more near and near,
 The lately ambush'd foes appear, 605
 And issuing from the grove, advance
 Some who on battle-charger prance.
 Who leads them on with foreign brand
 Far flashing in his red right hand?
 'Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now; 610
 I know him by his pallid brow;
 I know him by the evil eye
 That aids his envious treachery;
 I know him by his jet-black barb;
 Though now array'd in Arnaut garb, 615
 Apostate from his own vile faith,
 It shall not save him from the death:
 'Tis he! well met in any hour,
 Lost Leila's love, accursed Giaour!

As rolls the river into ocean, 620
 In sable torrent wildly streaming;
 As the sea-tide's opposing motion,
 In azure column proudly gleaming,
 Beats back the current many a rood,
 In curling foam and mingling flood, 625
 While eddying whirl, and breaking wave,
 Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
 Through sparkling spray, in thundering
 clash,
 The lightnings of the waters flash
 In awful whiteness o'er the shore, 630
 That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
 Thus—as the stream and ocean greet,
 With waves that madden as they meet—
 Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
 And fate, and fury, drive along. 635
 The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
 And pealing wide or ringing near
 Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
 The deathshot hissing from afar;
 The shock, the shout, the groan of war,
 Reverberate along that vale, 641
 More suited to the shepherd's tale:
 Though few the numbers—theirs the
 strife,
 That neither spares nor speaks for life!
 Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press, 645
 To seize and share the dear caress;
 But Love itself could never part
 For all that Beauty sighs to grant
 With half the fervour Hate bestows
 Upon the last embrace of foes, 650
 When grappling in the fight they fold
 Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
 Friends meet to part; Love laughs at faith;
 True foes, once met, are join'd till death!

With sabre shiver'd to the hilt, 655
 Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
 Yet strain'd within the sever'd hand
 Which quivers round that faithless brand;

His turban far behind him roll'd,
 And cleft in twain its firmest fold; 660
 His flowing robe by falchion torn,
 And crimson as those clouds of morn
 That, streak'd with dusky red, portend
 The day shall have a stormy end;
 A stain on every bush that bore 665
 A fragment of his palampore;
 His breast with wounds unnumber'd-riven,
 His back to earth, his face to heaven,
 Fall'n Hassan lies—his unclosed eye
 Yet lowering on his enemy, 670
 As if the hour that seal'd his fate
 Surviving left his quenchless hate;
 And o'er him bends that foe with brow
 As dark as his that bled below.—

'Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave, 675
 But his shall be a redder grave;
 Her spirit pointed well the steel
 Which taught that felon heart to feel.
 He call'd the Prophet, but his power
 Was vain against the vengeful Giaour:
 He call'd on Alla, but the word 681
 Arose unheeded or unheard.
 Thou Paynim fool! could Leila's prayer
 Be pass'd, and thine accorded there?
 I watch'd my time, I leagu'd with these,
 The traitor in his turn to seize; 686
 My wrath is wreak'd, the deed is done,
 And now I go—but go alone.'

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling:
 His mother look'd from her lattice high—
 She saw the dew's of eve besprinkling
 The pasture green beneath her eye, 692
 She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
 'Tis twilight—sure his train 's nigh.'
 She could not rest in the garden-bower,
 But gazed through the grate of his steepest
 tower: 696
 'Why comes he not? his steeds are fleet,
 Nor shrink they from the summer heat;
 Why sends not the Bridegroom his promis-
 ed gift?
 Is his heart more cold, or his barb less
 swift? 700
 Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now
 Has gain'd our nearest mountain's brow,
 And warily the steep descends,
 And now within the valley bends;
 And he bears the gift at his saddle-bow—
 How could I deem his courser slow? 706
 Right well my largess shall repay
 His welcome speed and weary way.'

The Tartar lighted at the gate,
 But scarce upheld his fainting weight: 710
 His swarthy visage spake distress,
 But this might be from weariness;

THE GIAOUR

His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,
But these might be from his courser's side;
He drew the token from his vest— 715
Angel of Death! 'tis Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent—his caftan red—
'Lady, a fearful bride thy son hath wed:
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear. 720
Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt:
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

A turban carved in coarsest stone,
A pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
Whereon can now be scarcely read 725
The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
Point out the spot where Hassan fell
A victim in that lonely dell.
There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee; 730
As ever scorn'd forbidden wine,
Or pray'd with face towards the shrine,
In orisons resumed anew
At solemn sound of 'Alla Hu!'
Yet died he by a stranger's hand, 735
And stranger in his native land;
Yet died he as in arms he stood,
And unavenged, at least in blood.
But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite, 740
And the dark heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright;
They come—their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave!
Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour 745
Is worthiest an immortal bower.

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne; 750
And fire unquench'd, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!
But first, on earth as Vampire sent, 755
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life; 760
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them, 765
Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a father's name—
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark 771
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,

And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallow'd hand shalt tear 775
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn,
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony! 780
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go—and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away 785
From spectre more accursed than they!

'How name ye yon lone Caloyer?
His features I have scann'd before
In mine own land: 'tis many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore, 790
I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever served a horseman's need.
But once I saw that face, yet then
It was so mark'd with inward pain,
I could not pass it by again; 795
It breathes the same dark spirit now,
As death were stamp'd upon his brow.

'Tis twice three years at summer tide
Since first among our freres he came;
And here it soothes him to abide 800
For some dark deed he will not name.
But never at our vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before confession chair
Kneels he, nor recks he when arise
Incense or anthem to the skies, 805
But broods within his cell alone,
His faith and race alike unknown.
The sea from Paynim land he crost,
And here ascended from the coast;
Yet seems he not of Othman race, 810
But only Christian in his face:
I'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine, 814
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
Great largess to these walls be brought,
And thus our abbot's favour bought;
But were I prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay.
Or pent within our penance cell 820
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden whelm'd beneath the sea;
Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying, 825
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh sever'd from its parent limb,
Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave, 830
And lures to leap into the wave.'

THE GIAOUR

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl.
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by; 835
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable,
A spirit yet unquell'd and high, 840
That claims and keeps ascendancy;
And like the bird whose pinions quake,
But cannot fly the gazing snake,
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor 'scape the glance they scarce 845
brook.

From him the half-affrighted Friar
When met alone would fain retire,
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferr'd to others fear and guile:
Not oft to smile descendeth he, 850
And when he doth 'tis sad to see
That he but mocks at Misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever;
As if his sorrow or disdain 855
Forbade him e'er to smile again.
Well were it so—such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face: 860
Time hath not yet the features fix'd,
But brighter traits with evil mix'd;
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it 865
waded:

The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;
The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestow'd in vain, 870
Which Grief could change, and Guilt
could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted. 875
The roofless cot, decay'd and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's 880
eye;

Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone!

His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he through the column'd 885
aisle;
With dread beheld, with gloom behold-
ing

The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks, his steps retire;

By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch; 890
There will he pause till all is done—
And hear the prayer, but utter none.
See—by the half-illumined wall
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound 896
The sabel of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead stray'd:
For he declines the convent oath,
And leaves those locks unhallow'd growth
But wears our garb in all beside; 901
And, not from piety but pride,
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
Lo!—mark ye, as the harmony 905
Peals louder praises to the sky,
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mix'd defiance and despair!
Saint Francis, keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine 910
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore;
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven!'

To love the softest hearts are prone, 916
But such can ne'er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel 920
The wound that time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plunged within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts—though still the 925
same;

Then temper'd to thy want, or will,
'Twill serve thee to defend or kill;
A breastplate for thine hour of need,
Or blade to bid thy foeman blee!;
But if a dagger's form it bear, 930
Let those who shape its edge beware!
Thus passion's fire, and woman's art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta'en,
And what they make it, must remain, 935
But break—before it bend again.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness 939
Might thank the pang that made it less.
We loathe what none are left to share:
Even bliss—'twere woe alone to bear;
The heart once thus left desolate
Must fly at last for ease—to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel 945
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,

Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay! 950
It is as if the desert bird,

Whose beak unlocks her bosom's
stream

To still her famish'd nestlings' scream,
Nor mourns a life to them transferr'd,
Should rend her rash devoted breast, 955
And find them flown her empty nest.
The keenest pangs the wretched find

Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,

The waste of feelings unemploy'd. 960
Who would be doom'd to gaze upon
A sky without a cloud or sun?

Less hideous far the tempest's roar
Than ne'er to brave the billows where—
Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on fortune's shore, 966
'Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay;—
Better to sink beneath the shock
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock!

'Father! thy days have pass'd in peace,
'Mid counted beads, and countless
prayer;

To bid the sins of others cease,

Thyself without a crime or care,
Save transient ills that all must bear, 975
Has been thy lot from youth to age;

And thou wilt bless thee from the rage
Of passions fierce and uncontroll'd,
Such as thy penitents unfold,

Whose secret sins and sorrows rest 980
Within thy pure and pitying breast.

My days, though few, have pass'd below
In much of joy, but more of woe;

Yet still in hours of love or strife, .
I've 'scaped the weariness of life: 985

Now leagu'd with friends, now grit by
foes,

I loathed the languor of repose.
Now nothing left to love or hate,

No more with hope or pride elate,
I'd rather be the thing that crawls 990

Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,

Condemn'd to meditate and gaze.
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast

For rest—but not to feel 'tis rest. 995
Soon shall my fate that wish fulfil;

And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still,

Dark as to thee my deeds may seem:
My memory now is but the tomb 1000

Of joys long dead; my hope, their doom:
Though better to have died with those

Than bear a life of lingering woes.
My spirit shrunk not to sustain

The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave 1006

Of ancient fool and modern knave:

Yet death I have not fear'd to meet;
And in the field it had been sweet,

Had danger woo'd me on to move 1010
The slave of glory, not of love.

I've braved it—not for honour's boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost;

To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay: 1015

But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize—

The maid I love, the man I hate—
And I will hunt the steps of fate,

To save or slay, as these require, 1020
Through rending steel and rolling fire:

Nor need'st thou doubt this speech from
one

Who would but do—what he *hath* done.
Death is but what the haughty brave,

The weak must bear, the wretch must
crave; 1025

Then let life go to Him who gave:
I have not quail'd to danger's brow

When high and happy—need I *now*?

'I loved her, Friar! nay, adored—
But these are words that all can use—

I proved it more in deed than word; 1031
There's blood upon that dinted sword,

A stain its steel can never lose:
'Twas shed for her, who died for me,

It warm'd the heart of one abhorr'd:
Nay, start not—no—nor bend thy knee,

Nor midst my sins such act record;
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,

For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene 1040

Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen.
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands

Well wielded in some hardy hands,
And wounds by Galileans given,

The surest pass to Turkish heaven, 1045
For him his Houris still might wait

Impatient at the Prophet's gate.
I loved her—love will find its way

Through paths where wolves would fear
to prey;

And if it dares enough, 'twere hard 1050
If passion met not some reward—

No matter how, or where, or why,
I did not vainly seek, nor sigh:

Yet sometimes, with remorse, in vain
I wish she had not loved again. 1055

She died—I dare not tell thee how;
But look—'tis written on my brow!

There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by time: 1059

Still, ere thou dost condemn me, pause;
Not mine the act, though I the cause.

Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one,

Faithless to him, he gave the blow;
But true to me, I laid him low: 1065

THE GIAOUR

Howe'er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which tyranny can ne'er enthrall:
And I, alas! too late to save! 1070
Yet all I then could give, I gave,
'Twas some relief, our foe a grave.
His death sits lightly; but her fate
Has made me—what thou well may'st
hate.

His doom was seal'd—he knew it well,
Warn'd by the voice of stern Taheer, 1076
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot peal'd of murder near

As filled the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil, 1080
A time that heeds nor pain nor toil;

One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Alla all he made:
He knew and cross'd me in the fray—
I gazed upon him where he lay, 1085

And watch'd his spirit ebb away;
Though pierced like pard by hunter's steel,
He felt not half that now I feel.

I search'd, but vainly search'd, to find
The workings of a wounded mind; 1090
Each feature of that sullen corse

Betray'd his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had Vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face!

The late repentance of that hour, 1095
When Penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave,
And will not soothe, and cannot save.

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like the lava flood 1101

That boils in Ætna's breast of flame.
I cannot prate in puling strain
Of lady-love and beauty's chain: 1104

If changing cheek, and scorching vein,
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain,
If bursting heart, and madd'ning brain,
And daring deed, and vengeful steel,

And all that I have felt, and feel,
Betoken love—that love was mine, 1110
And shown by many a bitter sign.

'Tis true, I could not whine nor sigh,
I knew but to obtain or die.

I die—but first I have possess'd,
And come what may, I have been bless'd.
Shall I the doom I sought upbraid? 1116

No—left of all, yet undismay'd
But for the thought of Leila slain,
Gave me the pleasure with the pain,
So would I live and love again. 1120

I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
For him who dies, but her who died:
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave—
Ah! had she but an earthly grave, 1124

This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.

She was a form of life and light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turn'd mine eye,
The Morning-star of Memory! 1130

'Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alla given,
To lift from earth our low desire.

Devotion wafts the mind above, 1135
But Heaven itself descends in love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;

A Ray of him who form'd the whole;
A Glory circling round the soul! 1140
I grant my love imperfect, all

That mortals by the name miscall;
Then deem it evil, what thou wilt;
But say, oh say, *hers* was not guilt!

She was my life's unerring light: 1145
That quench'd, what beam shall break my
night?

Oh! would it shone to lead me still,
Although to death or deadliest ill!
Why marvel ye, if they who lose

This present joy, this future hope, 1150
No more with sorrow meekly cope;
In phrensy then their fate accuse;
In madness do those fearful deeds

That seem to add but guilt to woe?
Alas! the breast that inly bleeds 1155
Hath nought to dread from outward
blow:

Who falls from all he knows of bliss,
Cares little into what abyss.
Fierce as the gloomy vulture's now

To thee, old man, my deeds appear:
I read abhorrence on thy brow, 1161
And this too was I born to bear!

'Tis true, that, like that bird of prey,
With havoc have I mark'd my way:
But this was taught me by the dove, 1165
To die—and know no second love.

This lesson yet hath man to learn,
Taught by the thing he dares to spurn:
The bird that sings within the brake,
The swan that swims upon the lake, 1170

One mate, and one alone, will take.
And let the fool still prone to range,
And sneer on all who cannot change,
Partake his jest with boasting boys;

I envy not his varied joys, 1175
But deem such feeble, heartless man
Less than yon solitary swan;
Far, far beneath the shallow maid

He left believing and betray'd. 1179
Such shame at least was never mine—
Leila! each thought was only thine!

My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high—my all below.
Earth holds no other like to thee,
Or, if it doth, in vain for me: 1185

For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.

The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death—attest my truth!
'Tis all too late—thou wert, thou art
The cherish'd madness of my heart! 1191

'And she was lost—and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life:
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time, abhor'd all place, 1196
Shuddering I shrunk from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charm'd before
The blackness of my bosom wore.
The rest thou dost already know, 1200
And all my sins, and half my woe.
But talk no more of penitence;
Thou seest I soon shall part from hence;
And if thy holy tale were true, 1204
The deed that's done canst thou undo?
Think me not thankless—but this grief
Looks not to priesthood for relief.
My soul's estate in secret guess:
But wouldst thou pity more, say less.
When thou canst bid my Leila live, 1210
Then will I sue thee to forgive;
Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses proffer grace.
Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest-cave her shrieking young,
And calm the lonely lioness: 1216
But soothe not—mock not my distress!

'In earlier days, and calmer hours,
When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's bowers,
I had—Ah! have I now?—a friend!
To him this pledge I charge thee send,
Memorial of a youthful vow; 1223
I would remind him of my end:
Though souls absorb'd like mine allow
Brief thought to distant friendship's claim,
Yet dear to him my blighted name. 1227
'Tis strange—he prophesied my doom,
And I have smiled—I then could smile—
When Prudence would his voice assume,
And warn—I reck'd not what—the
while: 1231

But now remembrance whispers o'er
Those accents scarcely mark'd before.
Say—that his bodings came to pass,
And he will start to hear their truth,
And wish his words had not been sooth:
Tell him, unheeding as I was, 1237
Through many a busy bitter scene
Of all our golden youth had been,
In pain, my faltering tongue had tried
To bless his memory ere I died; 1241
But Heaven in wrath would turn away
If Guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame,
Too gentle he to wound my name; 1245
And what have I to do with fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
Such cold request might sound like scorn;

And what than friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier? 1250
But bear this ring, his own of old,
And tell him—what thou dost behold!
The wither'd frame, the ruin'd mind,
The wrack by passion left behind,
A shrivell'd scroll, a scatter'd leaf, 1255
Sear'd by the autumn blast of grief!

'Tell me no more of fancy's gleam,
No, father, no, 'twas not a dream;
Alas! the dreamer first must sleep,—
I only watch'd, and wish'd to weep, 1260
But could not, for my burning brow
Throbb'd to the very brain as now:
I wish'd but for a single tear,
As something welcome, new, and dear:
I wish'd it then, I wish it still; 1265
Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not, if I might, be blest;
I want no paradise, but rest. 1270
'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;
And shining in her white symar,
As through yon pale gray cloud the
star
Which now I gaze on, as on her, 1275
Who look'd and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
To-morrow's night shall be more dark;
And I, before its rays appear,
That lifeless thing the living fear. 1280
I wander, father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal.
I saw her, friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes; 1284
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp—what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine—
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine! 1290
And art thou, dearest, changed so much
As meet my eye, yet mock my touch?
Ah! were thy beauties e'er so cold,
I care not so my arms enfold
The all they ever wish'd to hold. 1295
Alas! around a shadow prest
They shrink upon my lonely breast;
Yet still 'tis there! In silence stands,
And beckons with beseeching hands!
With braided hair, and bright-black eye—
I knew 'twas false—she could not die!
But he is dead! within the dell 1302
I saw him buried where he fell;
He comes not, for he cannot break
From earth; why then art thou awake?
They told me wild waves roll'd above
The face I view, the form I love; 1307
They told me—'twas a hideous tale!—
I'd tell it, but my tongue would fail:

THE GIAOUR

If true, and from thine ocean-cave 1310
 Thou com'st to claim a calmer grave,
 Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o'er
 This brow that then will burn no more;
 Or place them on my hopeless heart:
 But, shape or shade! whate'er thou
 art,
 In mercy ne'er again depart! 1316
 Or farther with thee bear my soul
 Than winds can waft or waters roll!

: : : : :

'Such is my name, and such my tale.
 Confessor! to thy secret ear 1320

I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
 And thank thee for the generous tear
 This glazing eye could never shed.
 Then lay me with the humblest dead,
 And, save the cross above my head, 1325
 Be neither name nor emblem spread,
 By prying stranger to be read,
 Or stay the passing pilgrim's tread.'

He pass'd—nor of his name and race
 Hath left a token or a trace, 1330
 Save what the father must not say
 Who shrived him on his dying day:
 This broken tale was all we knew
 Of her he loved, or him he slew.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

A TURKISH TALE,

'Had we never loved so kindly,
 Had we never loved so blindly,
 Never met or never parted,
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.'—BURNS.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD HOLLAND,

THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD AND RESPECT,
 BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED AND SINCERE FRIEND,

BYRON.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

KNOW ye the land where the cypress and
 myrtle

Are emblems of deeds that are done in
 their clime?

Where the rage of the vulture, the love of
 the turtle,

Now melt into sorrow, now madden to
 crime!

Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
 Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams
 ever shine; 6

Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd
 with perfume,

Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gûl in her
 bloom;

Where the citron and olive are fairest of
 fruit,

And the voice of the nightingale never is
 mute: 10

Where the tints of the earth, and the hues
 of the sky,

In colour though varied, in beauty may
 vie,

And the purple of ocean is deepest in
 dye;

Where the virgins are soft as the roses they
 twine, 14

And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
 'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of
 the Sun—

Can he smile on such deeds as his children
 have done?

Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
 Are the hearts which they bear, and the
 tales which they tell.

II

Begin with many a gallant slave, 20
 Apparell'd as becomes the brave,

Awaiting each his lord's behest
 To guide his steps, or guard his rest,

Old Giafir sate in his Divan: 24
 Deep thought was in his aged eye;

And though the face of Mussulman
 Not oft betrays to standers by

The mind within, well skill'd to hide
 All but unconquerable pride,

His pensive cheek and pondering brow
 Did more than he was wont avow. 31

III

'Let the chamber be clear'd.'—The train
disappear'd.—

'Now call me the chief of the Haram
guard.'

With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's
award. 35

'Haroun—when all the crowd that
wait

Are pass'd beneath the outer gate,
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveil'd!)
Hence, lead my daughter from her
tower; 40

Her fate is fix'd this very hour:
Yet not to her repeat my thought;
By me alone be duty taught!'

'Pacha! to hear is to obey.' 44

No more must slave to despot say—
Then to the tower had ta'en his way,
But here young Selim silence brake,

First lowly rendering reverence meet;
And downcast look'd, and gently spake,

Still standing at the Pacha's feet:
For son of Moslem must expire, 51
Ere dare to sit before his sire!

'Father! for fear that thou shouldst
chide

My sister, or her sable guide, 54
Know—for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine, then fall thy frowns on me—
So lovelily the morning shone,

That—let the old and weary sleep—
I could not; and to view alone 59

The fairest scenes of land and deep,
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat
high

Were irksome—for whate'er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude;

I on Zuleika's slumber broke, 65

And, as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our
own! 70

There linger'd we, beguiled too long
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;

Till I, who heard the deep tambour
Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,

To thee, and to my duty true, 75
Warn'd by the sound, to greet thee flew:
But there Zuleika wanders yet—

Nay, Father, rage not—nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's
tower.' 80

'Son of a slave'—the Pacha said—
'From unbelieving mother bred,

Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that becoms a man in thee.

Thou, when thine arm should bend the
bow, 85

And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,

Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.

Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire, 91

Would lend thee something of his fire!
Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;

Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall, 96

Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth!

Go—let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff—not the brand.

But, Haroun!—to my daughter speed;
And hark—of thine own head take
heed— 102

If thus Zuleika oft takes wing—
Thou see'st yon bow—it hath a string!'

V

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
At least that met old Giaffir's ear,

But every frown and every word 107
Pierced keener than a Christian's sword.

'Son of a slave!—reproach'd with fear!
Those gibes had cost another dear.

Son of a slave!—and *who* my sire?'
Thus held his thoughts their dark
career;

And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.

Old Giaffir gazed upon his son 115

And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;

He saw rebellion there begun:
'Come hither, boy—what, no reply?

I mark thee—and I know thee too; 120
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:

But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,

I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance.' 125

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:

That eye return'd him glance for
glance,

And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk
askance— 130

And why—he felt, but durst not tell.
'Much I misdoubt this wayward boy

Will one day work me more annoy:
I never loved him from his birth,

And—but his arm is little worth, 135
And scarcely in the chase could cope

With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

[CANTO I

Where man contends for fame and life—

I would not trust that look or tone: 140
No—nor the blood so near my own.
That blood—he hath not heard—no more—

I'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight, 144
Or Christian crouching in the fight—
But hark!—I hear Zuleika's voice;

Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;

Oh! more than ev'n her mother dear,
With all to hope, and nought to fear—
My Peril! ever welcome here! 151

Sweet, as the desert fountain's wave
To lips just cool'd in time to save—
Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More than they for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth and bless thee now.'

VI

Fair, as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent
smiling,

Whose image then was stamp'd upon her
mind— 160

But once beguil'd—and ever more be-
guiling;
Dazzling, as that, oh! too transcendent
vision

To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber
given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams
Elysian,

And paints the lost on Earth revived in
Heaven; 165

Soft, as the memory of buried love;
Pure, as the prayer which Childhood
wafts above,

Was she—the daughter of that rude old
Chief,
Who met the maid with tears—but not of
grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words
essay 170

To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart
confess 174

The might, the majesty of Loveliness?
Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her
alone—

The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her
face,

The heart whose softness harmonized the
whole, 180

And oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;

At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest, 186

Zuleika came—and Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt;

Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel;
Affection chain'd her to that heart; 191
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII

'Zuleika! child of gentleness!
How dear this very day must tell,

When I forget my own distress, 195
In losing what I love so well,
To bid thee with another dwell:

Another! and a braver man
Was never seen in battle's van.

We Moslem reck not much of blood; 200
But yet the line of Carasman
Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood

First of the bold Timariot bands
That won and well can keep their lands.

Enough that he who comes to woo
Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou: 206

His years need scarce a thought employ:
I would not have thee wed a boy.

And thou shalt have a noble dower:
And his and my united power 210

Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
Which others tremble but to scan,

And teach the messenger what fate
The bearer of such boon may wait.

And now thou know'st thy father's
will: 215

All that thy sex hath need to know:
'Twas mine to teach obedience still—

The way to love, thy lord may show.'

VIII

In silence bow'd the virgin's head;
And if her eye was fill'd with tears

That stifled feeling dare not shed, 221
And changed her cheek from pale to
red,

And red to pale, as through her ears
Those winged words like arrows sped,

What could such be but maiden
fears? 225

So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry;

So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
Even Pity scarce can wish it less!

Whate'er it was the sire forgot; 230
Or if remember'd, mark'd it not;
Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his
steed,

Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque,
And mounting featly for the mead,

With Maugrabee and Mamaluke,
His way amid his Delis took, 236
To witness many an active deed
With sabre keen, or blunt jerreed.
The Kislar only and his Moors
Watch well the Haram's massy doors.

IX

His head was leant upon his hand, 241
His eye look'd o'er the dark blue
water

That swiftly glides and gently swells
Between the winding Dardanelles;
But yet he saw nor sea nor strand, 245
Nor even his Pacha's turban'd band
Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
Careering cleave the folded felt,
With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
Nor mark'd the javelin-darting crowd
Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud—
He thought but of old Giaffir's
daughter! 252

X

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
One sigh Zuleika's thoughts bespoke:
Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate. 256
To him Zuleika's eyes was turn'd,
But little from his aspect learn'd:
Equal her grief, yet not the same;
Her heart confess'd a gentler flame: 260
But yet that heart, alarm'd or weak,
She knew not why, forbade to speak.
Yet speak she must—but when essay?
'How strange he thus should turn away!
Not thus we e'er before have met; 265
Nor thus shall be our parting yet.'
Thrice paced she slowly through the
room,

And watch'd his eye—it still was fix'd:
She snatch'd the urn wherein was
mix'd

The Persian Atar-gul's perfume, 270
And sprinkled all its odours o'er
The pictured roof and marble floor:
The drops, that through his glittering
vest

The playful girl's appeal address'd,
Unheeded o'er his bosom flew, 275
As if that breast were marble too.
'What, sullen yet? it must not be—
Oh! gentle Selim, this from thee!'
She saw in curious order set

The fairest flowers of eastern land—
'He loved them once; may touch them
yet, 281

If offer'd by Zuleika's hand.'
The childlike thought was hardly
breathed

Before the rose was pluck'd and
wreathed;

The next fond moment saw her seat
Her fairy form at Selim's feet: 286

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

'This rose to calm my brother's cares.
A message from the Bulbul bears;
It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song; 290
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI

'What! not receive my foolish flower?
Nay then I am indeed unblessed: 296
On me can thus thy forehead lower?

And know'st thou not who loves thee
best?

Oh, Selim dear! oh, more than dearest!
Say, is it me thou hat'st or fearest?
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
And I will kiss thee into rest,
Since words of mine, and songs must
fail,

Ev'n from my fabled nightingale.
I knew our sire at times was stern, 305
But this from thee had yet to learn:

Too well I know he loves thee not;
But is Zuleika's love forgot?

Ah! deem I right? the Pacha's plan—
This kinsman Bey of Carasman 310
Perhaps may prove some foe of thine.

If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,—
If shrines that ne'er approach allow
To woman's step admit her vow,—

Without thy free consent, command,
The Sultan should not have my hand!
Think'st thou that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart?

Ah! were I sever'd from thy side,
Where were thy friend—and who my
guide? 320

Years have not seen, Time shall not see,
The hour that tears my soul from thee:
Ev'n Azrael, from his deadly quiver

When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
That parts all else, shall doom for ever
Our hearts to undivided dust! 326

XII

He lived, he breathed, he moved, he
felt;

He raised the maid from where she
knelt;

His trance was gone, his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness
dwelt; 330

With thoughts that burn—in rays that
melt.

As the stream late conceal'd
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes reveal'd
In the light of its billows; 335

As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flash'd the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.

A war-horse at the trumpet's sound,
 A lion roused by heedless hound, 341
 A tyrant waked to sudden strife
 By graze of ill-directed knife,
 Starts not to more convulsive life
 Than he, who heard that vow, dis-
 play'd, 345
 And all, before repress'd, betray'd:
 'Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
 With life to keep, and scarce with life
 resign;
 Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
 Though sworn by one, hath bound us
 both. 350
 Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done;
 That vow hath saved more heads than
 one:
 But blench not thou—thy simplest tress
 Claims more from me than tenderness;
 I would not wrong the slenderest hair
 That clusters round thy forehead fair,
 For all the treasures buried far 357
 Within the caves of Istakar.
 This morning clouds upon me lower'd,
 Reproaches on my head were shower'd,
 And Giaffir almost call'd me coward!
 Now I have motive to be brave; 362
 The son of his neglected slave,
 Nay, start not, 'twas the term he gave,
 May show, though little apt to vaunt,
 A heart his words nor deeds can
 daunt. 366
His son, indeed!—yet, thanks to thee,
 Perchance I am, at least shall be;
 But let our plighted secret vow
 Be only known to us as now. 370
 I know the wretch who dares demand
 From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
 More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
 Holds not a Musselim's control:
 Was he not bred in Egripo? 375
 A viler race let Israel show!
 But let that pass—to none be told
 Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.
 To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
 I've partisans for peril's day: 380
 Think not I am what I appear;
 I've arms, and friends, and vengeance
 near.

'Think not thou art what thou appear-
 est!

My Selim, thou art sadly changed:
 This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest;
 But now thou'rt from thyself es-
 tranged. 386

My love thou surely knew'st before,
 If ne'er was less, nor can be more.
 To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
 And hate the night I know not why,
 Save that we meet not but by day;
 With thee to live, with thee to die,
 I dare not to my hope deny:

Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
 Like this—and this—no more than
 this; 395

For, Allah! sure thy lips are flame:
 What fever in thy veins is flushing?
 My own have nearly caught the same,
 At least I feel my cheek, too, blush-
 ing.

To soothe thy sickness, watch thy
 health, 400

Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
 Or stand with smiles un murmuring by,
 And lighten half thy poverty;
 Do all but close thy dying eye,

For that I could not live to try; 405
 To these alone my thoughts aspire:
 More can I do? or thou require?
 But, Selim, thou must answer why
 We need so much of mystery?
 The cause I cannot dream nor tell, 410
 But be it, since thou say'st 'tis well;
 Yet what thou mean'st by "arms" and
 "friends,"

Beyond my weaker sense extends.
 I meant that Giaffir should have heard
 The very vow I plighted thee; 415
 His wrath would not revoke my word:
 But surely he would leave me free.
 Can this fond wish seem strange in
 me,

To be what I have ever been?
 What other hath Zuleika seen 420
 From simple childhood's earliest hour?

What other can she seek to see
 Than thee, companion of her bower,
 The partner of her infancy?

These cherish'd thoughts with life
 begun, 425

Say, why must I no more avow?
 What change is wrought to make me
 shun

The truth; my pride, and thine till
 now?

To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
 Our law, our creed, our God denies;
 Nor shall one wandering thought of
 mine 431

At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
 No! happier made by that decree,
 He left me all in leaving thee.

Deep were my anguish, thus compell'd
 To wed with one I ne'er beheld: 436
 This wherefore should I not reveal?

Why wilt thou urge me to conceal?
 I know the Pacha's haughty mood
 To thee hath never boded good;

And he so often storms at nought,
 Allah! forbid that e'er he ought!
 And why I know not, but within
 My heart concealment weighs like sin.

If then such secrecy be crime, 445
 And such it feels while lurking here;

Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
 Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.

Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar,
My father leaves the mimic war; 450
I tremble now to meet his eye—
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?’

XIV

‘Zuleika—to thy tower’s retreat
Betake thee—Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state. 456
There’s fearful news from Danube’s
banks,
Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks,
For which the Giaour may give him
thanks!

Our Sultan hath a shorter way 460
Such costly triumph to repay.
But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warn’d the troops to food and
sleep,

Unto thy cell will Selim come: 464
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:
Our garden battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel 470
Which some have felt, and more may
feel.

Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought be-
fore:

Trust me, Zuleika—fear not me! 474
Thou know’st I hold a Haram key.’
‘Fear thee, my Selim! ne’er till now
Did word like this—’

‘Delay not thou;
I keep the key—and Haroun’s guard
Have some, and hope of more reward.
To-night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear 480
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear.’

CANTO THE SECOND

THE winds are high on Helle’s wave,
As on that night of stormy water
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave,
The lonely hope of Sestos’ daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky 6
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale, and breaking foam,
And shrieking sea-birds warn’d him
home;
And clouds aloft and tides below, 10
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
He could not see, he would not hear,
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw that light of love,
The only star it hail’d above; 15
His ear but rang with Hero’s song,
‘Ye waves, divide not lovers long!’—

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

That tale is old, but love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as
true. 19

II

The winds are high, and Helle’s tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night’s descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedew’d in vain,
The desert of old Priam’s pride; 24
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All—save immortal dreams that could
beguile
The blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle!

III

Oh! yet—for there my steps have been;
These feet have press’d the sacred
shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath
borne— 30
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,
Believing every hillock green
Contains no fabled hero’s ashes,
And that around the undoubted scene
Thine own ‘broad Hellespont’ still
dashes, 36
Be long my lot! and cold were he
Who there could gaze denying thee!

The night hath closed on Helle’s
stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida’s hill 40
That moon, which shone on his high
theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the mound
Of him who felt the Dardan’s arrow:
That mighty heap of gather’d ground
Which Ammon’s son ran roundly round
By nations raised, by monarchs crown’d,
Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
Within—thy dwelling-place how nar-
row! 50
Without—can only strangers breathe
The name of him that *was* beneath:
Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou—thy very dust is gone!

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer 55
The swain, and chase the boatman’s
fear;
Till then—no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling
skiff;
The scatter’d lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away; 60
The only lamp of this lone hour
Is glimmering in Zuleika’s tower.

Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,
And o'er her silken ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of
amber, 65

O'er which her fairy fingers ran;
Near these, with emerald rays beset,
(How could she thus that gem forget?)
Her mother's sainted amulet,
Whereon engraved the Koorsee text,
Could smoothish this life, and win the
next; 71

And by her comboloio lies
A Koran of illumined dyes;
And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
By Persian scribes redeem'd from time;
And o'er those scrolls, not oft so
mute, 76

Reclines her now neglected lute;
And round her lamp of fretted gold
Bloom flowers in urns of China's
mould;

The richest work of Iran's loom, 80
And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
All that can eye or sense delight

Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
But yet it hath an air of gloom.
She, of this Peri cell the sprite, 85
What doth she hence, and on so rude
a night?

VI

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslem
wear,
To guard from winds of heaven the
breast

As heaven itself to Selim dear, 90
With cautious steps the thicket thread-
ing,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till on the smoothish pathway tread-

More free her timid bosom beat, 95
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII

They reach'd at length a grotto, hewn
By nature, but enlarged by art, 101
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conn'd apart;
And oft in youthful reverie 104
She dream'd what Paradise might be:
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdain'd to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deem'd she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss 110
Without her, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seem'd wrought within
the grot: 115

It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell 120
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as
wield

The turban'd Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red—perchance with
guilt! 125

Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turn'd to see
Her Selim—"Oh! can this be he?" 130

IX

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crown'd turban
bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples
wore: 134

That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glitter'd at his waist,
Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung, 139
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white, the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiot;
Beneath—his golden plated vest
Clung like a cuirass to his breast;
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and
bound. 146

But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiangée.

X

'I said I was not what I seem'd'; 151
And now thou see'st my words were
true:

I have a tale thou hast not dream'd,
If sooth—its truth must others rue.
My story now 'twere vain to hide, 155
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared,
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own. 160
In this I speak not now of love;
That, let time, truth, and peril prove:
But first—Oh! never wed another—
Zuleika! I am not thy brother!

XI

'Oh! not my brother!—yet unsay—
 God! am I left alone on earth 166
 To mourn—I dare not curse—the day
 That saw my solitary birth?
 Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
 My sinking heart foreboded ill; 170
 But know *me* all I was before,
 Thy sister—friend—Zuleika still.
 Thou led'st me here perchance to kill;
 If thou hast cause for vengeance, see!
 My breast is offer'd—take thy fill! 175
 Far better with the dead to be
 Than live thus nothing now to thee!
 Perhaps far worse, for now I know
 Why Giafir always seem'd thy foe;
 And I, alas! am Giafir's child, 180
 For whom thou wert contemn'd, reviled.
 If not thy sister—wouldst thou save
 My life, oh! bid me be thy slave!'

XII

'My slave, Zuleika!—nay, I'm thine:
 But, gentle love, this transport calm.
 Thy lot shall yet be link'd with mine;
 I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
 And be that thought thy sorrow's
 balm.
 So may the Koran verse display'd
 Upon its steel direct my blade, 190
 In danger's hour to guard us both,
 As I preserve that awful oath!
 The name in which thy heart hath
 prided
 Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
 That tie is widen'd, not divided, 195
 Although thy Sire's my deadliest foe.
 My father was to Giafir all
 That Selim late was deem'd to thee:
 That brother wrought a brother's fall,
 But spared, at least, my infancy;
 And lull'd me with a vain deceit 201
 That yet a like return may meet.
 He rear'd me, not with tender help,
 But like the nephew of a Cain;
 He watch'd me like a lion's whelp, 205
 That gnaws and yet may break his
 chain.
 My father's blood in every vein
 Is boiling; but for thy dear sake
 No present vengeance will I take;
 Though here I must no more remain.
 But first, beloved Zuleika! hear' 211
 How Giafir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII

'How first their strife to rancour grew,
 If love or envy made them foes,
 It matters little if I knew; 215
 In fiery spirits, slights, though few
 And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
 In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
 Remember'd yet in Bosniac song,

And Paswan's rebel hordes attest 220
 How little love they bore such guest:
 His death is all I need relate,
 The stern effect of Giafir's hate;
 And how my birth disclosed to me,
 Whate'er beside it makes, hath made
 me free. 225

XIV

'When Paswan, after years of strife,
 At last for power, but first for life,
 In Widdin's walls too proudly sat,
 Our Pachas rallied round the state;
 Nor last nor least in high command,
 Each brother led a separate band; 231
 They gave their horse-tails to the
 wind,
 And mustering in Sophia's plain
 Their tents were pitch'd, their post
 assign'd;
 To one, alas! assign'd in vain! 235
 What need of words! the deadly bowl,
 By Giafir's order drugged and given,
 With venom subtle as his soul,
 Dismiss'd Abdallah's hence to heaven.
 Reclined and feverish in the bath, 240
 He, when the hunter's sport was up,
 But little deem'd a brother's wrath
 To quench his thirst had such a
 cup:
 The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
 He drank one draught, nor needed
 more! 245
 If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
 Call Haroun—he can tell it out.

XV

'The deed once done, and Paswan's
 feud
 In part suppress'd, though ne'er sub-
 dued, 249
 Abdallah's Pachalick was gain'd:—
 Thou know'st not what in our Divan
 Can wealth procure for worse than
 man—
 Abdallah's honours were obtain'd
 By him a brother's murder stain'd;
 'Tis true, the purchase nearly drain'd
 His ill-got treasure, soon replaced. 256
 Wouldst question whence? Survey the
 waste,
 And ask the squalid peasant how
 His gains repay his broiling brow!—
 Why me the stern usurper spared, 260
 Why thus with me his palace shared,
 I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
 And little fear from infant's force;
 Besides, adoption as a son
 By him whom Heaven accorded none,
 Or some unknown cabal, caprice, 266
 Preserved me thus;—but not in peace:
 He cannot curb his haughty mood,
 Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI

'Within thy father's house are foes;
 Not all who break his bread are
 true: 271
 To these should I my birth disclose,
 His days, his very hours were few:
 They only want a heart to lead,
 A hand to point them to the deed. 275
 But Haroun only knows, or knew,
 This tale, whose close is almost nigh:
 He in Abdallah's palace grew,
 And held that post in his Serai
 Which holds he here—he saw him
 die: 280
 But what could single slavery do?
 Avenge his lord? alas! too late;
 Or save his son from such a fate?
 He chose the last, and when elate
 With foes subdued, or friends be-
 tray'd, 285
 Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
 He led me helpless to his gate,
 And not in vain it seems essay'd
 To save the life for which he pray'd.
 The knowledge of my birth secured
 From all and each, but most from
 me; 291
 Thus Giaffir's safety was insured.
 Removed he too from Roumelie
 To this our Asiatic side,
 Far from our seats by Danube's tide,
 With none but Haroun, who retains
 Such knowledge—and that Nubian feels
 A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
 From which the captive gladly steals,
 And this and more to me reveals: 300
 Such still to guilt just Allah sends—
 Slaves, tools, accomplices—no friends!

XVII

'All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds;
 But harsher still my tale must be:
 Howe'er my tongue thy softness
 wounds, 305
 Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
 I saw thee start this garb to see,
 Yet is it one I oft have worn,
 And long must wear: this Galiongée,
 To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
 Is leader of those pirate hordes, 311
 Whose laws and lives are on their
 swords;
 To hear whose desolating tale
 Would make thy waning cheek more
 pale:
 Those arms thou see'st my band have
 brought, 315
 The hands that wield are not remote;
 This cup too for the rugged knaves
 Is fill'd—once quaff'd, they ne'er
 repine:
 Our Prophet might forgive the slaves;
 They're only infidels in wine. 320

XVIII

'What could I be? Proscribed at home,
 And taunted to a wish to roam;
 And listless left—for Giaffir's fear
 Denied the courser and the spear—
 Though oft—Oh, Mahomet! how oft!—
 In full Divan the despot scoff'd, 326
 As if my weak unwilling hand
 Refused the bridle or the brand:
 He ever went to war alone, 329
 And pent me here untried—unknown;
 To Haroun's care with women left,
 By hope unblest, of fame bereft,
 While thou—whose softness long en-
 dear'd,
 Though it unmann'd me, still had
 cheer'd—
 To Brusa's walls for safety sent, 335
 Awaited'st there the field's event.
 Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
 Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
 His captive, though with dread resign-
 ing,
 My thralldom for a season broke,
 On promise to return before 341
 The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
 'Tis vain—my tongue cannot impart
 My almost drunkenness of heart,
 When first this liberated eye 345
 Survey'd Earth, Ocean, Sun, and Sky,
 As if my spirit pierced them through,
 And all their inmost wonders knew!
 One word alone can paint to thee
 That more than feeling—I was Free!
 E'en for thy presence ceased to pine;
 The World—nay, Heaven itself was
 mine!

XIX

'The shallop of a trusty Moor
 Convey'd me from this idle shore;
 I long'd to see the isles that gem 355
 Old Ocean's purple diadem:
 I sought by turns, and saw them all;
 But when and where I join'd the crew,
 With whom I'm pledged to rise or fall,
 When all that we design to do 360
 Is done, 'twill then be time more meet
 To tell thee, when the tale's complete.

XX

'Tis true, they are a lawless brood,
 But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
 And every creed, and every race, 365
 With them hath found—may find a
 place;
 But open speech, and ready hand,
 Obedience to their chief's command:
 A soul for every enterprise,
 That never sees with terror's eyes; 370
 Friendship for each, and faith to all,
 And vengeance vow'd for those who
 fall,

Have made them fitting instruments
 For more than ev'n my own intents.
 And some—and I have studied all 375
 Distinguish'd from the vulgar rank,
 But chiefly to my council call
 The wisdom of the cautious Frank—
 And some to higher thoughts aspire,
 The last of Lambro's patriots there
 Anticipated freedom share; 381
 And oft around the cavern fire
 On visionary schemes debate,
 To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.
 So let them ease their hearts with prate
 Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
 I have a love for freedom too. 387
 Ay! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam,
 Or only know on land the Tartar's home!
 My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
 Are more than cities and Serais to me:
 Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
 Across the desert, or before the gale,
 Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide,
 my prow!
 But be the star that guides the wanderer,
 Thou! 395
 Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my
 bark;
 The Dove of peace and promise to mine
 ark!
 Or, since that hope denied in worlds of
 strife,
 Be thou the rainbow to the storms of
 life!
 The evening beam that smiles the clouds
 away, 400
 And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
 Blest—as the Muezzin's strain from
 Mecca's wall
 To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call;
 Soft—as the melody of youthful days,
 That steals the trembling tear of speech-
 less praise; 405
 Dear—as his native song to Exile's ears,
 Shall sound each tone thy long-loved
 voice endears.
 For thee in those bright isles is built a
 bower
 Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.
 A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and
 hand, 410
 Wait—wave—defend—destroy—at thy
 command!
 Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
 The spoil of nations shall bedeck my
 bride.
 The Haram's languid years of listless ease
 Are well resig'n'd for cares—for joys like
 these: 415
 Not blind to fate, I see, where'er I rove,
 Unnumber'd perils—but one only love!
 Yet well my toils shall that fond breast
 repay,
 Though fortune frown, or falser friends
 betray.

How dear the dream in darkest hours of
 ill, 420
 Should all be changed, to find thee faithful
 still!
 Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
 To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
 To soothe each sorrow, share in each
 delight,
 Blend every thought, do all—but disunite!
 Once free, 'tis mine our horde again to
 guide; 426
 Friends to each other, foes to aught be-
 side:
 Yet there we follow but the bent assign'd
 By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
 Mark! where his carnage and his con-
 quests cease! 430
 He makes a solitude, and calls it—peace!
 I, like the rest, must use my skill or
 strength,
 But ask no land beyond my sabre's
 length:
 Power sways but by division—her re-
 source 434
 The blest alternative of fraud or force!
 Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
 When cities cage us in a social home:
 There ev'n thy soul might err—how oft
 the heart
 Corruption shakes which peril could not
 part!
 And woman, more than man, when death
 or woe, 440
 Or even Disgrace, would lay her lover low,
 Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame—
 Away suspicion!—*not* Zuleika's name!
 But life is hazard at the best; and here
 No more remains to win, and much to
 fear: 445
 Yes, fear! the doubt, the dread of losing
 thee,
 By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern
 decree.
 That dread shall vanish with the favouring
 gale,
 Which Love to-night hath promised to my
 sail:
 No danger daunts the pair his smile hath
 blest, 450
 Their steps still roving, but their hearts at
 rest.
 With thee all toils are sweet, each clime
 hath charms;
 Earth—sea alike—our world within our
 arms!
 Ay—let the loud winds whistle o'er the
 deck,
 So that those arms cling closer round my
 neck: 455
 The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
 No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee!
 The war of elements no fears impart
 To Love, whose deadliest bane is human
 Art:

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

[CANTO II

There lie the only rocks our course can
check; 460
Here moments menace—there are years
of wreck!
But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's
shape!
This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
Few words remain of mine my tale to
close;
Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes;
Yea—foes—to me will Giaffir's hate de-
cline? 466
And is not Osman, who would part us,
thine?

XXI

'His head and faith from doubt and
death
Return'd in time my guard to save;
Few heard, none told, that o'er the
wave 470
From isle to isle I roved the while;
And since, though parted from my band
Too seldom now I leave the land,
No deed they've done, nor deed shall
do,
Ere I have heard and doom'd it too:
I form the plan, decree the spoil, 476
'Tis fit I oftener share the toil.
But now too long I've held thine ear;
Time presses, floats my bark, and here
We leave behind but hate and fear.
To-morrow Osman with his train 481
Arrives—to-night must break thy chain:
And wouldst thou save that haughty
Bey,—
Perchance *his* life who gave thee
thine,—
With me this hour away—away! 485
But yet, though thou art plighted
mine,
Wouldst thou recall thy willing vow,
Appall'd by truths imparted now,
Here rest I—not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on *my* head!' 490

XXII

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that statue of distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The mother harden'd into stone:
All in the maid that eye could see 495
Was but a younger Niobé.
But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essay'd to speak, or look reply,
Beneath the garden's wicket porch 499
Far flashed on high a blazing torch!
Another—and another—and another—
'Oh! fly—no more—yet now my more
than brother!'
Far, wide, through every thicket spread
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone—for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand. 506

They part, pursue, return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel;
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving: 510
And now almost they touch the cave—
Oh! must that grot be Selim's grave?

XXIII

Dauntless he stood—' 'Tis come—soon
past—
One kiss, Zuleika—'tis my last: 514
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few—the attempt were
rash:
No matter—yet one effort more.'
Forth to the cavern mouth he step;
His pistol's echo rang on high, 520
Zuleika started not, nor wept,
Despair benumb'd her breast and
eye!—
'They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, 'tis but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more
nigh.
Then forth my father's scimitar, 526
Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war!
Farewell, Zuleika!—sweet! retire:
Yet stay within—here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe. 530
Stir not—lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear'st thou for him?—may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire! 534
No—though by him that poison pour'd;
No—though again he call me coward!
But tamely shall I meet their steel?
No—as each crest save *his* may feel!' 538

XXIV

One bound he made, and gain'd the
sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk 540
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk:
Another falls—but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes; 544
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave:
His boat appears—not five oars'
length—
His comrades strain with desperate
strength—
Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay, 551
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet—wild—unwearied to the strand
They struggle—now they touch the
land!
They come—'tis but to add to slaugh-
ter— 555
His heart's best blood is on the water.

XXV

Escaped from shot, unharm'd by steel,
Or scarcely grazed its force to feel,
Had Selim won, betray'd, beset, 559
To where the strand and billows met;
There as his last step left the land—
And the last death-blow dealt his
hand—

Ah! wherefore did he turn to look
For her his eye but sought in vain?
That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
Hath doom'd his death, or fix'd his
chain. 566

Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover's hope remain!
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay, 570
When, at the instant, hiss'd the ball—
'So may the foes of Giaffir fall!'

Whose voice is heard? whose carbine
rang?

Whose bullet through the night-air
sang,

Too nearly, deadly aim'd to err? 575
'Tis thine—Abdallah's Murderer!

The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate:
Fast from his breast the blood is
bubbling,

The whiteness of the sea-foam trou-
bling— 580

If aught his lips essay'd to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;

Few trophies of the fight are there:
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent; but some signs of fray 586

That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shiver'd brand;
Steps stamp'd; and dash'd into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand

May there be mark'd; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep

There lies a white capote! 595
'Tis rent in twain—one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o'er in vain;

But where is he who wore?
Ye! who would o'er his relics weep,
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep

And cast on Lemnos' shore:
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow, 605
His head heaves with the heaving
billow;

That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,

Then levell'd with the wave— 610
What reck's it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?

The bird that tears that prostrate form
Hath only robb'd the meaner worm;
The only heart, the only eye 615

Had bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scatter'd limbs composed,
And mourn'd above his turban-stone,
That heart hath burst—that eye was
closed—

Yea—closed before his own! 620

XXVII

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail!
And woman's eye is wet—man's cheek is
pale:

Zuleika! last of Giaffir's race,
Thy destined lord is come too late:

He sees not—ne'er shall see thy face!
Can he not hear 626

The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear?
Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,

The Koran-chanters of the hymn of fate,
The silent slaves with folded arms that
wait, 630

Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
Tell him thy tale!

Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
That fearful moment when he left the
cave

Thy heart grew chill: 635
He was thy hope—thy joy—thy love—
thine all,

And that last thought on him thou couldst
not save

Sufficed to kill;
Burst forth in one wild cry—and all was
still,

Peace to thy broken heart, and virgin
grave! 640

Ah! happy! but of life to lose the worst!
That grief—though deep—though fatal—
was thy first!

Thrice happy ne'er to feel nor fear the force
Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge,
remorse!

And, oh! that pang where more than mad-
ness lies! 645

The worm that will not sleep—and never
dies;

Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly
night,

That dreads the darkness, and yet loathes
the light,

That winds around, and tears the quiver-
ing heart!

Ah! wherefore not consume it—and de-
part! 650

Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!
Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy
head,

Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost
spread;

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

[CANTO II

By that same hand Abdallah—Selim
bled,
Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's
bed, 656
She, whom thy sultan had but seen to
wed,
Thy Daughter's dead!
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely
beam,
The Star hath set that shone on Helle's
stream. 660
What quench'd its ray?—the blood that
thou hast shed!
Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
'Where is my child?'—an Echo answers—
'Where?'

XXVIII

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms 666
And withers not, though branch and
leaf
Are stamp'd with an eternal grief,
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms, 671
Ev'n in that deadly grove—
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair—
So white—so faint—the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high; 676
And yet, though storms and blight
assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem—in
vain—
To-morrow sees it bloom again: 680
The stalk some spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering
hour, 685
And buds unshelter'd by a bower;
Nor droops though Spring refuse her
shower,
Nor woos the summer beam:

To it the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen—but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings, 691
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!
It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a
strain: 695
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain!
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'Tis sorrow so unmix'd with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well!
But when the day-blush bursts from
high 705
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe,
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
Yet harsh be they that blame,)
That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound 711
Into Zuleika's name.
'Tis from her cypress summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word:
'Tis from her lowly virgin earth 715
That white rose takes its tender birth.
There late was laid a marble stone;
Eve saw it placed—the Morrow gone!
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep-fix'd pillar to the shore;
For there, as Helle's legends tell, 721
Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell;
Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose
wave
Denied his bones a holier grave:
And there by night, reclin'd, 'tis said,
Is seen a ghastly turban'd head: 726
And hence extended by the billow,
'Tis named the 'Pirate-phantom's
pillow!'
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourish'd; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's
tale! 732

THE CORSAIR

A TALE

———'I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno.'
TASSO, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, canto x.

TO

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

MY DEAR MOORE,

I DEDICATE to you the last production with which I shall trespass on public patience, and your indulgence, for some years; and I own that I feel anxious to avail myself of this latest and only opportunity of adorning my pages with a name, consecrated by unshaken public principle, and the most undoubted and various talents. While Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots; while you stand alone the first of her bards in her estimation, and Britain repeats and ratifies the decree, permit me, whose only regret, since our first acquaintance, has been the years he had lost before it commenced, to add the humble but sincere suffrage of friendship to the voice of more than one nation. It will at least prove to you, that I have neither forgotten the gratification derived from your society, nor abandoned the prospect of its renewal, whenever your leisure or inclination allows you to atone to your friends for too long an absence. It is said among those friends, I trust truly, that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be laid in the East; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of your own country, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and feeling of her daughters, may there be found; and Collins, when he denominated his *Oriental* his *Irish Eclogues*, was not aware how true, at least, was a part of his parallel. Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality, are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.

May I add a few words on a subject on which all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable?—Self. I have written much, and published more than enough to demand a longer silence than I now meditate; but, for some years to come, it is my intention to tempt no further the award of 'Gods, men, nor columns.' In the present composition I have attempted not the most difficult, but, perhaps the best adapted measure to our language, the good old and now neglected heroic couplet. The stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart: Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octo-syllabic verse; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius: in blank verse, Milton, Thomson, and our dramatists, are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they are kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure certainly; but as I did not deviate into the other from a wish to flatter what is called public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology, and take my chance once more with that versification, in which I have hitherto published nothing but compositions whose former circulation is part of my present, and will be of my future regret.

With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so—if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of 'drawing from self,' the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards (far more deserving, I allow) in very reputable plight, and quite exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than 'The Giaour,' and perhaps—but so—I must admit Childe Harold to be a very repulsive personage; and as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever 'alias' they please.

If, however, it were worth while to remove the impression, it might be of some service to me, that the man who is alike the delight of his readers and his friends, the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own, permits me here and elsewhere to subscribe myself,

Most truly,

And affectionately,

His obedient servant,

BYRON.

January 2, 1814.

THE CORSAIR

CANTO THE FIRST

'—nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nelle miseria,———DANTE.

I

'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue
sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls
as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows
foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their
sway—
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious
slave!
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving
wave;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and
ease!
Whom slumber soothes not—pleasure
cannot please—
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath
tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters
wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse's madden-
ing play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless
way?
That for itself can woo the approaching
fight,
And turn what some deem danger to de-
light;
That seeks what cravens shun with more
than zeal,
And where the feebler faint can only feel—
Feel—to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
No dread of death if with us die our foes—
Save that it seems even duller than re-
pose:
Come when it will—we snatch the life of
life—
When lost—what reck's it but disease or
strife?
Let him who crawls enamour'd of decay,
Cling to his couch, and sicken years away:
Heave his thick breath, and shake his
palsied head;
Ours—the fresh turf, and not the feverish
bed.
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his
soul,
Ours with one pang—one bound—escapes
control.

His corse may boast its urn and narrow
cave,
And they who loath'd his life may gild his
grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely
shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our
dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in danger's day,
When those who win at length divide the
prey,
And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er
each brow,
How had the brave who fell exulted now!

II

Such were the notes that from the Pirate's
isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the
while:
Such were the sounds that thrill'd the
rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seem'd a song!
In scatter'd groups upon the golden sand,
They game—carouse—converse—or whet
the brand:
Select the arms—to each his blade assign,
And careless eye the blood that dims its
shine,
Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
While others straggling muse along the
shore;
For the wild bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping
net;
Gaze where some distant sail a speck
supplies,
With all the thirsting eye of Enterprise:
Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
And marvel where they next shall seize a
spoil:
No matter where—their chief's allotment
this;
Theirs, to believe no prey nor plan amiss.
But who that CHIEF? his name on every
shore
Is famed and fear'd—they ask and know
no more.
With these he mingles not but to com-
mand;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and
hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial
mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they
fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still—

CANTO I]

And for his fare—the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have pass'd untasted
too; 70

Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,

And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.

But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense, 75

His mind seems nourish'd by that abstinence.

'Steer to that shore!'—they sail. 'Do this!'—'tis done:

'Now form and follow me!'—the spoil is won.

Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,

And all obey and few inquire his will; 80

To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye

Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

III

'A sail!—a sail!'—a promised prize to Hope!

Her nation—flag—how speaks the telescope?

No prize, alas! but yet a welcome sail: 85

The blood-red signal glitters in the gale. Yes—she is ours—a home—returning bark—

Blow fair, thou breeze!—she anchors ere the dark.

Already doubled is the cape—our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns
the spray. 90

How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying—never from her
foes—

She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.

Who would not brave the battle-fire, the wreck, 95

To move the monarch of her peopled deck?

IV

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings;

The sails are furl'd; and anchoring round she swings;

And gathering loiterers on the land discern

Her boat descending from the latticed stern. 100

'Tis mann'd—the oars keep concert to the strand,

Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.
Hail to the welcome shout!—the friendly
speech!

When hand grasps hand uniting on the beach;

THE CORSAIR

The smile, the question, and the quick reply, 105

And the heart's promise of festivity!

V

The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd;

The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,
And woman's gentler anxious tone is heard—

Friends', husbands', lovers' names in each dear word: 110

'Oh! are they safe? we ask not of success—

But shall we see them? will their accents bless?

From where the battle roars, the billows chafe,

They doubtless boldly did—but who are safe?

Here let them haste to gladden and surprise, 115

And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes!

VI

'Where is our chief? for him we bear report—

And doubt that joy—which hails our coming—short;

Yet thus sincere, 'tis cheering, though so brief;

But, Juan! instant guide us to our chief:
Our greeting paid, we'll feast on our return, 121

And all shall hear what each may wish to learn.'

Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,
To where his watch-tower beetles o'er the bay,

By bushy brake, and wild flowers blossoming, 125

And freshness breathing from each silver spring,

Whose scatter'd streams from granite basins burst,

Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst;

From crag to cliff they mount—Near yonder cave,

What lonely straggler looks along the wave? 130

In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?

'Tis he—'tis Conrad—here, as wont, alone;

On—Juan!—on—and make our purpose known.

The bark he views—and tell him we would greet 135

His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:
We dare not yet approach—thou know'st his mood

When strange or uninvited steps intrude.'

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO I

VII

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent;—

He spake not, but a sign express'd assent.
These Juan calls—they come—to their salute

He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.

'These letters, Chief, are from the Greek—the spy,

Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:

Whate'er his tidings, we can well report,
Much that'—'Peace, peace!'—he cuts their prating short.

Wondering they turn, abash'd, while each to each

Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech:

They watch his glance with many a stealing look,

To gather how that eye the tidings took;
But, this as if he guess'd, with head aside,

Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,

He read the scroll—'My tablets, Juan, hark—

Where is Gonsalvo?'

'In the anchor'd bark.'

'There let him stay—to him this order bear—

Back to your duty—for my course prepare:

Myself this enterprise to-night will share.'

'To-night, Lord Conrad!'

'Ay! at set of sun:

The breeze will freshen when the day is done.

My corslet, cloak—one hour and we are gone.

Sling on thy bugle—see that free from rust
My carbine-lock springs worthy of my trust;

Be the edge sharpen'd of my boarding-brand,

And give its guard more room to fit my hand.

This let the armourer with speed dispose;
Last time, it more fatigued my arm than foes:

Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
To tell us when the hour of stay's expired.'

VIII

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
Too soon to seek again the watery waste:

Yet they repine not—so that Conrad guides;

And who dare question aught that he decides?

That man of loneliness and mystery
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;

Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,

And tints each swarthy cheek with sal- lower hue;

Still sways their souls with that command- ing art

That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.

What is that spell, that thus his lawless train

Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
What should it be, that thus their faith

can bind?
The power of Thought—the magic of the

Mind!
Link'd with success, assumed and kept

with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will;

Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,

Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own.

Such hath it been—shall be—beneath the sun

The many still must labour for the one!
'Tis Nature's doom—but let the wretch

who toils
Accuse not, hate not *him* who wears the

spoils.
Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid

chains,
How light the balance of his humbler pains!

IX

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act, but Gods at least in face,

In Conrad's form seems little to admire,
Though his dark eyebrow shades a glance

of fire:
Robust but not Herculean—to the sight

No giant frame sets forth his common height;

Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,

Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;

They gaze and marvel how—and still confess

That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun-burnt his cheek, his forehead high

and pale
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;

And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce

conceals.
Though smooth his voice, and calm his

general mien,
Still seems there something he would not

have seen:
His features' deepening lines and varying

hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view,

As if within that murkiness of mind 211
Work'd feelings fearful, and yet unde-
fined;

Such might it be—that none could truly
tell—

Too close inquiry his stern glance would
quell.

There breathe but few whose aspect might
defy 215

The full encounter of his searching eye;
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze
would seek

To probe his heart and watch his chang-
ing cheek,

At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's
to day.

There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly
fell, 225

Hope withering fled, and Mercy sigh'd
farewell!

X

Slight are the outward signs of evil
thought,

Within—within—'twas there the spirit
wrought!

Love shows all changes—Hate, Ambition,
Guile,

Betray no further than the bitter smile;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness
thrown 231

Along the govern'd aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions; and to judge their
mien,

He, who would see, must be himself un-
seen.

Then—with the hurried tread, the up-
ward eye, 235

The clenched hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear;

Then—with each feature working from
the heart,

With feelings, loosed to strengthen—not
depart, 240

That rise, convulse, contend—that freeze,
or glow,

Flush in the cheek, or damp upon the
brow;

Then, Stranger! if thou canst, and tremb-
lest not,

Behold his soul—the rest that soothes his
lot!

Mark how that lone and blighted bosom
sears 245

The scathing thought of execrated years!
Behold—but who hath seen, or e'er shall
see,

Man as himself—the secret spirit free?

XI

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
To lead the guilty—guilt's worse instru-
ment— 250

His soul was changed, before his deeds
had driven

Him forth to war with man and forfeit
heaven.

Warp'd by the world in Disappointment's
school,

In words too wise, in conduct *there* a fool;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to
stoop, 255

Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,

And not the traitors who betray'd him
still;

Nor deem'd that gifts bestow'd on better
men

Had left him joy, and means to give
again. 260

Fear'd, shunn'd, belied, ere youth had
lost her force,

He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred
call,

To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain—but he deem'd

The rest no better than the thing he
seem'd; 266

And scorn'd the best as hypocrites who hid
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.

He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loath'd him, crouch'd and
dreaded too. 270

Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike
exempt

From all affection and from all contempt;
His name could sadden, and his acts sur-
prise;

But they that fear'd him dared not to
despise;

Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he
wake 275

The slumbering venom of the folded
snake:

The first may turn, but not avenge the
blow;

The last expires, but leaves no living foe;
Fast to the doom'd offender's form it
clings,

And he may crush—not conquer—still it
stings! 280

XII

None are all evil—quickenings round his
heart

One softer feeling would not yet depart;
Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled

By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he
strove, 285

And even in him it asks the name of Love!

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO I

Yes, it was love—unchangeable—unchanged,
Felt but for one from whom he never ranged;
Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunn'd, nor sought, but coldly pass'd them by;
Though many a beauty droop'd in prison'd bower,
None ever sooth'd his most unguarded hour.
Yes—it was Love—if thoughts of tender-
Tried in temptation, strengthen'd by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet—oh more than all! untired by time;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove—
If there be love in mortals—this was love!
He was a villain—ay, reproaches shower
On him—but not the passion, nor its power,
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this love-liest one!

XIII

He paused a moment—till his hastening men
Pass'd the first winding downward to the glen.
'Strange tidings!—many a peril have I pass'd,
Nor know I why this next appears the last!
Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear,
Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
'Tis rash to meet, but surer death to wait
Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
And, if my plan but hold, and Fortune smile,
We'll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
Ay, let them slumber—peaceful be their dreams!
Morn ne'er awoke them with such brilliant beams
As kindle high to-night (but blow, thou breeze!)
To warm these slow avengers of the seas.

Now to Medora—Oh! my sinking heart,
Long may her own be lighter than thou art!
Yet was I brave—mean boast where all are brave!
Ev'n insects sting for aught they seek to save.
This common courage which with brutes we share,
That owes its deadliest efforts to despair,
Small merit claims—but 'twas my nobler hope
To teach my few with numbers still to cope;
Long have I led them—not to vainly bleed:
No medium now—we perish or succeed;
So let it be—it irks not me to die;
But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.
My lot hath long had little of my care,
But chafes my pride thus baffled in the snare:
Is this my skill? my craft? to set at last
Hope, power, and life upon a single cast?
Oh, Fate!—accuse thy folly, not thy fate!
She may redeem thee still, nor yet too late.'

XIV

Thus with himself communion held he, till
He reach'd the summit of his tower-crown'd hill:
There at the portal paused—for wild and soft
He heard those accents never heard too oft;
Through the high lattice far yet sweet they rung,
And these the notes his bird of beauty sung:

1

'Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

2

'There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal, but un-
seen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3

'Remember me—Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline:
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

'My fondest, faintest, latest accents
 hear—
 Grief for the dead not virtue can re-
 prove;
 Then give me all I ever ask'd—a tear,
 The first—last—sole reward of so much
 love!'

He pass'd the portal, cross'd the corridor,
 And reach'd the chamber as the strain
 gave o'er:
 'My own Medora! sure thy song is
 sad—'

'In Conrad's absence wouldst thou have
 it glad?
 Without thine ear to listen to my lay,
 Still must my song my thoughts, my soul
 betray:

Still must each action to my bosom suit,
 My heart unhush'd, although my lips were
 mute!

Oh! many a night on this lone couch re-
 clined,
 My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd
 the wind,

And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd
 thy sail

The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;
 Though soft, it seem'd the low prophetic
 dirge,

That mourn'd thee floating on the savage
 surge;

Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
 Lest spies less true should let the blaze
 expire;

And many a restless hour outwatch'd each
 star,

And morning came—and still thou wert
 afar.

Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom
 blew,

And day broke dreary on my troubled
 view,

And still I gazed and gazed—and not a
 brow

Was granted to my tears, my truth, my
 vow!

At length 'twas noon—I hail'd and blest
 the mast

That met my sight—it near'd—Alas! it
 pass'd!

Another came—Oh God! 'twas thine at
 last!

Would that those days were over! wilt
 thou ne'er,

My Conrad! learn the joys of peace to
 share?

Sure thou hast more than wealth, and
 many a home

As bright as this invites us not to roam:
 Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,
 I only tremble when thou art not here;

Then not for mine, but that far dearer
 life,
 Which flies from love and languishes for
 strife—
 How strange that heart, to me so tender
 still,
 Should war with nature and its better
 will!

'Yea, strange indeed—that heart hath
 long been changed;

Worm-like 'twas trampled, adder-like
 avenged,

Without one hope on earth beyond thy
 love,

And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.
 Yet the same feeling which thou dost con-
 demn,

My very love to thee is hate to them,
 So closely mingling here, that disen-
 twined,

I cease to love thee when I love mankind:
 Yet dread not this—the proof of all the
 past

Assures the future that my love will last;
 But—oh, Medora! nerve thy gentler heart;

This hour again—but not for long—we
 part.'

'This hour we part—my heart forebode
 this:

Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
 This hour—it cannot be—this hour
 away!

Yon bark hath hardly anchor'd in the
 bay:

Her consort still is absent, and her crew
 Have need of rest before they toil anew:

My love! thou mock'st my weakness; and
 wouldst steel

My breast before the time when it must feel;
 But trifle now no more with my distress,

Such mirth hath less of play than bitter-
 ness.

Be silent, Conrad!—dearest! come and
 share

The feast these hands delighted to pre-
 pare;

Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
 See, I have pluck'd the fruit that promised
 best,

And where not sure, perplex'd, but pleased,
 I guess'd

At such as seem'd the fairest; thrice the
 hill

My steps have wound to try the coolest
 rill;

Yes! thy sherbet to-night will sweetly flow,
 See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!

The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never
 cheers;

Thou more than Moslem when the cup
 appears:

Think not I mean to chide—for I rejoice
 What others deem a penance is thy choice.

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO I

But come, the board is spread; our silver
^{lamp}
 Is trimm'd, and heeds not the sirocco's
 damp:
 Then shall my handmaids while the time
 along,
 And join with me the dance, or wake the
 song;
 Or my guitar, which still thou lov'st to
 hear,
 Shall soothe or lull—or, should it vex
 thine ear,
 We'll turn the tale, by Ariosto told,
 Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.
 Why, thou wert worse than he who broke
 his vow
 To that lost damsel, shouldst thou leave
 me now;
 Or even that traitor chief—I've seen thee
 smile,
 When the clear sky show'd Ariadne's
 Isle,
 Which I have pointed from these cliffs the
 while:
 And thus half sportive, half in fear, I
 said,
 Lest time should raise that doubt to more
 than dread,
 Thus Conrad, too, will quit me for the
 main;
 And he deceived me—for he came again!
 'Again, again—and oft again—my love!
 If there be life below, and hope above,
 He will return—but now, the moments
 bring
 The time of parting with redoubled wing:
 The why, the where—what boots it now
 to tell?
 Since all must end in that wild word—
 farewell!
 Yet would I fain—did time allow—dis-
 close—
 Fear not—these are no formidable foes;
 And here shall watch a more than wonted
 guard,
 For sudden siege and long defence pre-
 pared:
 Nor be thou lonely, though thy lord's
 away,
 Our matrons and thy handmaids with
 thee stay;
 And this thy comfort—that, when next
 we meet,
 Security shall make repose more sweet.
 List!—'tis the bugle!—Juan shrilly
 blew—
 'One kiss—one more—another—Oh!
 Adieu!'

She rose—she sprung—she clung to his
 embrace,
 Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden
 face:

He dared not raise to his that deep-blue
 eye,
 Which downcast droop'd in tearless
 agony.
 Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his
 arms,
 In all the wildness of dishevell'd charms;
 Scarce beat that bosom where his image
 dwelt
 So full—that feeling seem'd almost un-
 felt!
 Hark—peals the thunder of the signal-
 gun!
 It told 'twas sunset, and he cursed that
 sun.
 Again—again—that form he madly
 press'd,
 Which mutely clasp'd, imploringly car-
 ess'd!
 And tottering to the couch his bride he
 bore,
 One moment gazed, as if to gaze no more;
 Felt that for him earth held but her
 alone,
 Kiss'd her cold forehead—turn'd—is Con-
 rad gone?

XV

'And is he gone?' on sudden solitude
 How oft that fearful question will intrude!
 'Twas but an instant past, and here he
 stood!
 And now—without the portal's porch
 she rush'd,
 And then at length her tears in freedom
 gush'd;
 Big, bright, and fast, unknown to her they
 fell;
 But still her lips refused to send—'Fare-
 well!'
 For in that word—that fatal word—how-
 e'er
 We promise, hope, believe, then breathes
 despair.
 O'er every feature of that still, pale face,
 Had sorrow fix'd what time can ne'er
 erase:
 The tender blue of that large loving eye
 Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
 Till—Oh, how far!—it caught a glimpse
 of him,
 And then it flow'd, and phrensied seem'd
 to swim,
 Through those long, dark, and glistening
 lashes dew'd
 With drops of sadness oft to be renew'd.
 'He's gone!'—against her heart that
 hand is driven,
 Convulsed and quick—then gently raised
 to heaven:
 She look'd and saw the heaving of the
 main;
 The white sail set—she dared not look
 again;

But turn'd with sickening soul within the gate—
 'It is no dream—and I am desolate!'

XVI

From crag to crag descending, swiftly sped
 Stern Conrad down, nor once he turn'd
 his head;
 But shrunk when'er the windings of his way
 Forced on his eye what he would not
 survey,

His lone but lovely dwelling on the steep,
 That hail'd him first when homeward from
 the deep:

And she—the dim and melancholy star,
 Whose ray of beauty reach'd him from
 afar,

On her he must not gaze, he must not think,
 There he might rest—but on Destruction's
 brink:

Yet once almost he stopp'd, and nearly
 gave

His fate to chance, his projects to the wave:
 But no—it must not be—a worthy chief
 May melt, but not betray to woman's
 grief.

He sees his bark, he notes how fair the
 wind,

And sternly gathers all his might of mind:
 Again he hurries on—and as he hears
 The clang of tumult vibrate on his ears,
 The busy sounds, the bustle of the shore,
 The shout, the signal, and the dashing oar;
 As marks his eye the seaway on the mast,
 The anchors rise, the sails unfurling fast,
 The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that
 urge

That mute adieu to those who stem the
 surge;

And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft,
 He marvell'd how his heart could seem so
 soft.

Fire in his glance, and wildness in his
 breast,

He feels of all his former self possess;
 He bounds—he flies—until his footsteps
 reach

The verge where ends the cliff, begins the
 beach,

There checks his speed; but pauses less to
 breathe

The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
 Than there his wonted statelier step renew;
 Nor rush, disturb'd by haste, to vulgar
 view:

For well had Conrad learn'd to curb the
 crowd,

By arts that veil, and oft preserve the proud;
 His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
 That seems to shun the sight—and awes if
 seen:

The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
 That checks low mirth, but lacks not
 courtesy;

All these he wielded to command assent:
 But where he wish'd to win, so well unbent,
 That kindness cancell'd fear in those who
 heard,

And others' gifts show'd mean beside his
 word,

When echo'd to the heart as from his own
 His deep yet tender melody of tone:

But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
 He cared not what he soften'd, but sub-
 dued:

The evil passions of his youth had made
 Him value less who loved—than what
 obey'd.

Around him mustering ranged his ready
 guard,

Before him Juan stands—'Are all pre-
 pared?'

'They are—nay more—embark'd: the
 latest boat

Waits but my Chief—'

'My sword, and my capote.'

Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,
 His belt and cloak were o'er his shoulders
 flung:

'Call Pedro here!' He comes—and Con-
 rad bends,

With all the courtesy he deign'd his friends;
 'Receive these tablets, and peruse with
 care,

Words of high trust and truth are graven
 there;

Double the guard, and when Anselmo's
 bark

Arrives, let him alike these orders mark:
 In three days (serve the breeze) the sun
 shall shine

On our return—till then all peace be
 thine!'

This said, his brother Pirate's hand he
 wrung,

Then to his boat with haughty gesture
 sprung.

Flash'd the dipt oars, and sparkling with
 the stroke,

Around the waves' phosphoric brightness
 broke;

They gain the vessel—on the deck he
 stands,—

Shrieks the shrill whistle, ply the busy
 hands—

He marks how well the ship her helm
 obeys,

How gallant all her crew, and deigns to
 praise.

His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo
 turn—

Why doth he start, and inly seem to
 mourn?

Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower
 And live a moment o'er the parting hour;

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO I

She—his Medora—did she mark the
prow? ⁵⁸¹

Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of
day—

Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan, his means, and
ends; ⁵⁸⁶

Before them burns the lamp, and spreads
the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract de-
bate;

To anxious eyes what hour is ever late?
Meantime, the steady breeze serenely
blew, ⁵⁹¹

And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Pass'd the high headlands of each cluster-
ing isle,

To gain their port—long—long ere morn-
ing smile:

And soon the night-glass through the
narrow bay ⁵⁹⁵

Discovers where the Pacha's galleys lay.
Count they each sail, and mark how there
supine

The lights in vain o'er heedless Moslem
shine.

Secure, unnoted, Conrad's prow pass'd by,
And anchor'd where his ambush meant
to lie; ⁶⁰⁰

Screen'd from espial by the jutting cape,
That rears on high its rude fantastic shape,
Then rose his band to duty—not from
sleep—

Equip'd for deeds alike on land or deep;
While lean'd their leader o'er the fretting
flood, ⁶⁰⁵

And calmly talk'd—and yet he talk'd of
blood!

CANTO THE SECOND

'Conoscete i dubiosi desiri?'—DANTE

In Coron's bay floats many a galley light,
Through Coron's lattices the lamps are
bright,

For Seyd, the Pacha, makes a feast to-night:
A feast for promised triumph yet to come,
When he shall drag the fetter'd Rovers
home; ⁵

This hath he sworn by Allah and his sword,
And faithful to his firman and his word,
His summon'd prows collect along the coast,
And great the gathering crews, and loud
the boast;

Already shared the captives and the prize,
Though far the distant foe they thus
despise; ¹¹

'Tis but to sail—no doubt to-morrow's Sun
Will see the Pirates bound, their haven
won!

Meantime the watch may slumber, if they
will,

Nor only wake to war, but dreaming kill.
Though all, who can, disperse on shore
and seek ¹⁶

To flesh their glowing valour on the Greek;
How well such deed becomes the turban'd
brave

To bare the sabre's edge before a slave!
Infest his dwelling—but forbear to slay,
Their arms are strong, yet merciful to-day,
And do not deign to smite because they
may! ²²

Unless some gay caprice suggests the blow,
To keep in practice for the coming foe,
Revel and rout the evening hours beguile,
And they who wish to wear a head must
smile; ²⁶

For Moslem mouths produce their choicest
cheer,

And hoard their curses, till the coast is
clear.

II

High in his hall reclines the turban'd Seyd;
Around—the bearded chiefs he came to
lead. ³⁰

Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff—
Forbidden draughts, 'tis said, he dared to
quaff,

Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems'
use;

The long chibouque's dissolving cloud
supply, ³⁵

While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chiefs em-
bark;

But waves are somewhat treacherous in
the dark:

And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o'er the rugged deep:
Feast there who can—nor con-:hat till they
must, ⁴¹

And less to conquest than to Korans trust:
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's
boast.

III

With cautious reverence from the outer
gate ⁴⁵

Slow stalks the slave, whose office there to
wait,

Bows his bent head, his hand salutes the
floor,

Ere yet his tongue the trusted tidings bore:
'A captive Dervise, from the Pirate's nest
Escaped, is here—himself would tell the
rest.' ⁵⁰

He took the sign from Seyd's assenting eye,
And led the holy man in silence nigh.
His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
His step was feeble, and his look deprest;

Yet worn he seem'd of hardship more than
 years,
 And pale his cheek with penance, not from
 fears.
 Vow'd to his God—his sable locks he
 wore,
 And these his lofty cap rose proudly o'er:
 Around his form his loose long robe was
 thrown,
 And wrapt a breast bestow'd on heaven
 alone;
 Submissive, yet with self-possession
 mann'd,
 He calmly met the curious eyes that
 scann'd;
 And question of his coming fain would
 seek,
 Before the Pacha's will allow'd to speak.

IV

'Whence com'st thou, Dervise?'
 'From the outlaw's den, 65
 A fugitive—'
 'Thy capture where and when?'
 'From Scalanovo's port to Scio's isle,
 The Saick was bound; but Allah did not
 smile
 Upon our course—the Moslem mer-
 chant's gains
 The Rovers won; our limbs have worn
 their chains. 70
 I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast,
 Beyond the wandering freedom which I
 lost;
 At length a fisher's humble boat by night
 Afforded hope, and offer'd chance of
 flight;
 I seized the hour, and find my safety
 here— 75
 With thee—most mighty Pacha! who can
 fear?'

'How speed the outlaws? stand they well
 prepared,
 Their plunder'd wealth, and robber's rock,
 to guard?
 Dream they of this our preparation,
 doom'd
 To view with fire their scorpion nest con-
 sumed?' 80

'Pacha! the fetter'd captive's mourning eye,
 That weeps for flight, but ill can play the
 spy;
 I only heard the reckless waters roar,
 Those waves that would not bear me from
 the shore; 84
 I only mark'd the glorious sun and sky,
 Too bright, too blue, for my captivity;
 And felt that all which Freedom's bosom
 cheers,
 Must break my chain before it dried my
 tears.

This may'st thou judge, at least, from my
 escape,
 They little deem of aught in peril's shape;
 Else vainly had I pray'd or sought the
 chance 91
 That leads me here—if eyed with vigilance:
 The careless guard that did not see me fly
 May watch as idly when thy power is nigh.
 Pacha! my limbs are faint—and nature
 craves 95
 Food for my hunger, rest from tossing
 waves:
 Permit my absence—peace be with thee!
 Peace
 With all around!—now grant repose—
 release.'

'Stay, Dervise! I have more to question—
 stay,
 I do command thee—sit—dost hear?—
 obey! 100
 More I must ask, and food the slaves shall
 bring;
 Thou shalt not pine where all are ban-
 queting:
 The supper done—prepare thee to reply,
 Clearly and full—I love not mystery.
 'Twere vain to guess what shook the pious
 man, 105
 Who look'd not lovingly on that Divan;
 Nor show'd high relish for the banquet
 prest,
 And less respect for every fellow guest.
 'Twas but a moment's peevish hectic pass'd
 Along his cheek, and tranquillised as fast:
 He sate him down in silence, and his look
 Resumed the calmness which before for-
 sook: 112
 The feast was usher'd in, but sumptuous fare
 He shunn'd as if some poison mingled
 there.
 For one so long condemn'd to toil and
 fast, 115
 Methinks he strangely spares the rich re-
 past.

'What ails thee, Dervise? eat—dost thou
 suppose
 This feast a Christian's? or my friends thy
 foes?
 Why dost thou shun the salt? that sacred
 pledge,
 Which, once partaken, blunts the sabre's
 edge, 120
 Makes ev'n contending tribes in peace
 unite,
 And hated hosts seem brethren to the
 sight!'

'Salt seasons dainties—and my food is still
 The humblest root, my drink the simplest
 rill;
 And my stern vow and order's laws oppose
 To break or mingle bread with friends or
 foes; 126

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO II

It may seem strange—if there be aught to
dread,
That peril rests upon my single head;
But for thy sway—nay more—thy Sultan's
throne,
I taste nor bread nor banquet—save alone;
Infringed our order's rule, the Prophet's
rage¹³¹
To Mecca's dome might bar my pil-
grimage.'

'Well—as thou wilt—ascetic as thou art—
One question answer; then in peace de-
part.

How many?—Ha! it cannot sure be day?
What star—what sun is bursting on the
bay?¹³⁶

It shines a lake of fire!—away—away!
Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
The galleys feed the flames—and I afar!
Accursed Dervise!—these thy tidings—
thou¹⁴⁰

Some villain spy—seize—cleave him—
slay him now!

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of
light,
Nor less his change of form appall'd the
sight:

Up rose that Dervise—not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dash'd his high cap, and tore his robe
away—¹⁴⁶

Shone his mail'd breast, and flash'd his
sable's ray!

His close but glittering casque, and sable
plume,

More glittering eye, and black brow's
sabler gloom,

Glared on the Moslems' eyes some Afrit
sprite,¹⁵⁰

Whose demon death-blow left no hope for
fight.

The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high, and torches from be-
low;

The shriek of terror, and the mingling
yell—

For swords began to clash, and shouts to
swell—¹⁵⁵

Flung o'er that spot of earth the air of hell!
Distracted, to and fro, the flying slaves
Behold but bloody shore and fiery waves;
Nought heeded they the Pacha's angry cry,
They seize that Dervise!—seize on Za-
tanai!¹⁶⁰

He saw their terror—check'd the first
despair

That urged him but to stand and perish
there,

Since far too early and too well obey'd,
The flame was kindled ere the signal made;
He saw their terror—from his baldric
drew¹⁶⁵

His bugle—brief the blast—but shrilly
blew;

'Tis answered—'Well ye speed, my gallant
crew!

Why did I doubt their quickness of career?
And deem design had left me single here?'
Sweeps his long arm—that sabre's whirl-
ing sway¹⁷⁰

Sheds fast atonement for its first delay;
Completes his fury what their fear begun,
And makes the many basely quail to one.
The cloven turbans o'er the chamber
spread,

And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its
head:¹⁷⁵

Even Seyd, convulsed, o'erwhelm'd, with
rage, surprise,

Retreats before him, though he still defies.
No craven he—and yet he dreads the blow,
So much Confusion magnifies his foe!

His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
He tore his beard, and foaming fled the
fight;¹⁸¹

For now the pirates pass'd the Haram gate,
And burst within—and it were death to
wait;

Where wild Amazement shrieking—kneel-
ing throws

The sword aside—in vain—the blood o'er-
flows!¹⁸⁵

The Corsairs pouring, haste to where
within

Invited Conrad's bugle, and the din
Of groaning victims, and wild cries for life,
Proclaim'd how well he did the work of
strife.

They shout to find him grim and lonely
there,¹⁹⁰

A glutted tiger mangling in his lair!
But short their greeting, shorter his reply—

'Tis well—but Seyd escapes, and he must
die—

Much hath been done, but more remains
to do—

Their galleys blaze—why not their city
too?'¹⁹⁵

Quick at the word they seized him each a
torch,

And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
A stern delight was fix'd in Conrad's eye,
But sudden sunk—for on his ear the cry
Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
Knock'd at that heart unmoved by battle's
yell.²⁰¹

'Oh! burst the Haram—wrong not on
your lives

One female form—remember—we have
wives.

On them such outrage Vengeance will repay;
Man is our foe, and such 'tis ours to slay:
But still we spared—must spare the weaker
prey.²⁰⁶

Oh! I forgot—but Heaven will not forgive
 If at my word the helpless cease to live;
 Follow who will—I go—we yet have time
 Our souls to lighten of at least a crime.
 He climbs the crackling stair, he bursts the
 door, 211
 Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the
 floor;
 His breath choked gasping with the vol-
 umed smoke,
 But still from room to room his way he
 broke.
 They search—they find—they save: with
 lusty arms 215
 Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
 Calm their loud fears; sustain their sinking
 frames
 With all the care defenceless beauty
 claims:
 So well could Conrad tame their fiercest
 mood,
 And check the very hands with gore im-
 brued. 220
 But who is she? whom Conrad's arms
 convey
 From reeking pile and combat's wreck
 away—
 Who but the love of him he dooms to
 bleed?
 The Haram queen—but still the slave of
 Seyd!

VI

Brief time had Conrad now to greet
 Gulnare, 225
 Few words to re-assure the trembling fair;
 For in that pause compassion snatch'd
 from war,
 The foe before retiring, fast and far,
 With wonder saw their footsteps unpur-
 sued,
 First slower fled—then rallied—then
 withstood. 230
 This Seyd perceives, then first perceives
 how few,
 Compared with his, the Corsair's roving
 crew,
 And blushes o'er his error, as he eyes
 The ruin wrought by panic and surprise.
 Alla il Alla! Vengeance swells the cry—
 Shame mounts to rage that must atone or
 die! 236
 And flame for flame and blood for blood
 must tell,
 The tide of triumph ebbs that flow'd too
 well—
 When wrath returns to renovated strife,
 And those who fought for conquest strike
 for life. 240
 Conrad beheld the danger—he beheld
 His followers faint by freshening foes re-
 pell'd:
 'One effort—one—to break the circling
 host!'

They form—un ch —waver—all
 is lost!
 Within a narrower ring compress'd, beset,
 Hopeless, not heartless, strive and struggle
 yet— 246
 Ah! now they fight in firmest file no more,
 Hemm'd in, cut off, cleft down, and tram-
 pled o'er,
 But each strikes singly, silently, and home,
 And sinks outwearied rather than o'er-
 come, 250
 His last faint quittance rendering with his
 breath,
 Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of
 death!

But first, ere came the rallying host to
 blows,
 And rank to rank, and hand to hand
 oppose,
 Gulnare and all her Haram handmaids
 freed, 255
 Safe in the dome of one who held their
 creed,
 By Conrad's mandate safely were be-
 stow'd,
 And dried those tears for life and fame that
 flow'd:
 And when that dark-eyed lady, young
 Gulnare,
 Recall'd those thoughts late wandering in
 despair, 260
 Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
 That smooth'd his accents; soften'd in his
 eye:
 'Twas strange—that robber thus with gore
 bedew'd
 Seem'd gentler than Seyd in fondest
 mood.
 The Pacha woo'd as if he deem'd the slave
 Must seem delighted with the heart he
 gave; 266
 The Corsair vow'd protection, soothed af-
 fright,
 As if his homage were a woman's right.
 'The wish is wrong—nay, worse for fe-
 male—vain: 269
 Yet much I long to view that chief again;
 If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
 The life my loving lord remember'd not!'

VII

And him she saw, where thickest carnage
 spread,
 But gather'd breathing from the happier
 dead;
 Far from his band, and battling with a
 host 275
 That deem'd right dearly won the field he lost,
 Fell'd—bleeding—baffled of the death he
 sought,
 And snatch'd to expiate all the ills he
 wrought;

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO II

Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance ponder'd o'er new plans
of pain, 280
And stanch'd the blood she saves to shed
again—
But drop for drop, for Seyd's unglutted
eye
Would doom him ever dying—ne'er to
die!
Can this be he? triumphant late she saw,
When his red hand's wild gesture waved
a law! 285
'Tis he indeed—disarm'd but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possess;
His wounds too slight, though taken with
that will,
Which would have kiss'd the hand that
then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul—he scarcely ask'd to
heaven? 291
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striven and struck
for death?
He deeply felt—what mortal hearts must
feel,
When thus reversed on faithless fortune's
wheel, 295
For crimes committed, and the victor's
threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt—
He deeply, darkly felt; but evil pride
That led to perpetrate, now serves to
hide.
Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is
seen, 301
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffen-
ing wound,
But few that saw—so calmly gazed
around:
Though the far shouting of the distant
crowd, 304
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear;
And the grim guards that to his durance
led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

IX

The Leech was sent—but not in mercy—
there, 310
To note how much the life yet left could
bear;
He found enough to load with heaviest
chain,
And promise feeling for the wrench of
pain;
To-morrow—yea—to-morrow's evening
sun
Will sinking see impalement's pangs
begun, 315
And rising with the wonted blush of morn

Behold how well or ill those pangs are
borne.
Of torments this the longest and the worst,
Which adds all other agony to thirst,
That day by day death still forbears to
slake, 320
While famish'd vultures flit around the
stake.
'Oh! water—water!'—smiling Hate
denies
The victim's prayer, for if he drinks he
dies.
This was his doom;—the Leech, the guard
were gone,
And left proud Conrad fetter'd and alone.

X

'Twere vain to paint to what his feelings
grew— 326
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.
There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed, com-
bined,
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse—
That juggling fiend, who never spake
before, 332
But cries 'I warn'd thee!' when the deed
is o'er.
Vain voice! the spirit burning but unbent,
May writhe, rebel—the weak alone repent!
Even in that lonely hour when most it
feels, 336
And, to itself, all, all that self reveals,—
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest, as once, unseen, un-
sought,
But the wild prospect when the soul re-
views, 340
All rushing through their thousand
avenues—
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in
our fate; 345
The hopeless past, the hasting future
driven
Too quickly on to guess of hell or heaven;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps re-
member'd not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern reflection each a crime;
The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more con-
ceal'd— 353
All, in a word, from which all eyes must
start,
That opening sepulchre—the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes, till Pride
awake, 356
To snatch the mirror from the soul—and
break.

Ay, Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all—

All—all—before—beyond—the deadliest fall.

Each hath some fear, and he who least betrays, 360

The only hypocrite deserving praise:
Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies;

But he who looks on death—and silent dies.
So steel'd by pondering o'er his far career,
He half-way meets him should he menace near! 365

XI

In the high chamber of his highest tower
Sate Conrad, fetter'd in the Pacha's power.
His palace perish'd in the flame—this fort
Contain'd at once his captive and his court.

Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame, 370

His foe, if vanquish'd, had but shared the same:—

Alone he sate—in solitude had scann'd
His guilty bosom, but that breast he mann'd:

One thought alone he could not—dared
not meet—

'Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?'
Then—only then—his clanking hands he raised, 376

And strain'd with rage the chain on which
he gazed;

But soon he found, or feign'd, or dream'd
relief,

And smiled in self-derision of his grief,
'And now come torture when it will—or may, 380

More need of rest to nerve me for the day!'
This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
And, whatsoe'er his visions, quickly slept.

'Twas hardly midnight when that fray
began,

For Conrad's plans matured, at once were
done: 385

And Havoc loathes so much the waste of
time,

She scarce had left an uncommitted crime.
One hour beheld him since the tide he stemm'd—

Disguised, discover'd, conquering, ta'en,
condemn'd— 389

A chief on land, an outlaw on the deep—
Destroying, saving, prison'd, and asleep!

XII

He slept in calmest seeming, for his breath
Was hush'd so deep—Ah! happy if in death!

He slept—Who o'er his placid slumber
bends?

His foes are gone, and here he hath no
friends; 395

Is it some seraph sent to grant him grace?
No, 'tis an earthly form with heavenly face!

Its white arm raised a lamp—yet gently hid,
Lest the ray flash abruptly on the lid

Of that closed eye, which opens but to
pain, 400

And once unclosed—but once may close

That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so
fair,

And auburn waves of gemm'd and braided
hair;

With shape of fairy lightness—naked foot,
That shines like snow, and falls on earth as

mute— 405

Through guards and dunest night how
came it there?

Ah! rather ask what will not woman dare?
Whom youth and pity lead like thee,
Gulnare!

She could not sleep—and while the
Pacha's rest

In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-
guest, 410

She left his side—his signet-ring she bore,
Which oft in sport adorn'd her hand

before—
And with it, scarcely question'd, won her
way

Through drowsy guards that must that
sign obey.

Worn out with toil, and tired with chang-
ing blows, 415

Their eyes had envied Conrad his repose;
And chill and nodding at the turret door,
They stretch their listless limbs, and watch
no more;

Just raised their heads to hail the signet-
ring,

Nor ask or what or who the sign may
bring. 420

XIII

She gazed in wonder, 'Can he calmly sleep,
While other eyes his fall or ravage weep?

And mine in restlessness are wandering
here—

What sudden spell hath made this man so
dear?

True—'tis to him my life, and more, I owe,
And me and mine he spared from worse
than woe: 426

'Tis late to think—but soft, his slumber
breaks—

How heavily he sighs!—he starts—
awakes!

He raised his head, and dazzled with the
light,

His eye seem'd dubious if it saw aright:
He moved his hand—the grating of his
chain 431

Too harshly told him that he lived again.

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO II

'What is that form? if not a shape of air,
Methinks, my jailor's face shows wond-
drous fair!'

'Pirate! thou know'st me not—but I am
one, 435
Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely
done;

Look on me—and remember her, thy hand
Snatch'd from the flames, and thy more
fearful band.

I come through darkness—and I scarce
know why—

Yet not to hurt—I would not see thee die.'

'If so, kind lady! thine the only eye 441
That would not here in that gay hope de-
light:

Theirs is the chance—and let them use
their right.

But still I thank their courtesy or thine,
That would confess me at so fair a shrine!'
Strange though it seem—yet with extre-
mest grief 446

Is link'd a mirth—it doth not bring relief—
That playfulness of Sorrow ne'er beguiles,
And smiles in bitterness—but still it
smiles;

And sometimes with the wisest and the
best, 450

Till even the scaffold echoes with their
jest!

Yet not the joy to which it seems akin—
It may deceive all hearts, save that within.
Whate'er it was that flash'd on Conrad,
now

A laughing wildness half unbent his brow
And these his accents had a sound of
mirth, 456

As if the last he could enjoy on earth;
Yet 'gainst his nature—for through that
short life,

Few thoughts had he to spare from gloom
and strife.

XIV

'Corsair! thy doom is named—but I have
power 460

To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
Thee would I spare—nay more—would
save thee now,

But this—time—hope—nor even thy
strength allow;

But all I can, I will: at least, delay

The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
More now were ruin—even thyself were
loth 466

The vain attempt should bring but doom
to both.'

'Yes! loth indeed:—my soul is nerved to
all,

Or fall'n too low to fear a further fall:
Tempt not thyself with peril—me with
hope 470

Of flight from foes with whom I could not
cope:

Unfit to vanquish, shall I meanly fly,
The one of all my band that would not die?
Yet there is one to whom my memory
clings,

Till to these eyes her own wild softness
springs. 475

My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these—my bark, my sword, my love,

my God!

The last I left in youth!—he leaves me
now—

And Man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with
prayer 480

Wrung from the coward crouching of
despair;

It is enough—I breathe, and I can bear.
My sword is shaken from the worthless
hand

That might have better kept so true a
brand;

My bark is sunk or captive—but my
love— 485

For her in sooth my voice would mount
above:

Oh! she is all that still to earth can bind—
And this will break a heart so more than
kind,

And blight a form—till thine appear'd,
Gulnare!

Mine eye ne'er ask'd if others were as
fair.' 490

'Thou lov'st another then?—but what to
me

Is this—'tis nothing—nothing e'er can be:
But yet—thou lov'st—and—Oh! I envy
those

Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can
repose,

Who never feel the void—t'ie wandering
thought 495

That sighs o'er visions—such as mine hath
wrought.'

'Lady, methought thy love was his, for
whom

This arm redeem'd thee from a fiery tomb.'

'My love stern Seyd's! Oh—No—No—
not my love—

Yet much this heart, that strives no more,
once strove 500

To meet his passion—but it would not be.
I felt—I feel—love dwells with—with the
free.

I am a slave, a favour'd slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very
blest!

Oft must my soul the question undergo,
Of—'Dost thou love?' and burn to
answer, 'No!'

506

Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one—perhaps another
there. 510

He takes the hand I give not, nor withhold—

Its pulse nor check'd, nor quicken'd—
calmly cold:

And when resign'd, it drops a lifeless
weight

From one I never loved enough to hate.
No warmth these lips return by his im-
prest, 515

And chill'd remembrance shudders o'er
the rest.

Yes—had I ever proved that passion's zeal,
The change to hatred were at least to feel:

But still he goes unmourn'd, returns un-
sought,

And oft when present—absent from my
thought. 520

Or when reflection comes—and come it
must—

I fear that henceforth 'twill but bring dis-
gust;

I am his slave—but, in despite of pride,
'Twere worse than bondage to become his
bride.

Oh! that this dotage of his breast would
cease: 525

Or seek another and give mine release,
But yesterday—I could have said, to
peace!

Yes, if unwonted fondness now I feign,
Remember, captive! 'tis to break thy chain;

Repay the life that to thy hand I owe; 530
To give thee back to all endear'd below,
Who share such love as I can never know.

Farewell, morn breaks, and I must now
away:

'Twill cost me dear—but dread no death
to-day!'

xv

She press'd his fetter'd fingers to her heart,
And bow'd her head, and turn'd her to de-
part, 536

And noiseless as a lovely dream is gone.
And was she here? and is he now alone?

What gem hath dropp'd and sparkles o'er
his chain?

The tear most sacred, shed for others'
pain, 540

That starts at once—bright—pure—from
Pity's mine,

Already polish'd by the hand divine!

Oh! too convincing—dangerously dear—
In woman's eye the unanswerable tear!

That weapon of her weakness she can
wield, 545

To save, subdue—at once her spear and
shield:

Avoid it—Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!

What lost a world, and bade a hero fly?
The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye. 550

Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven;
By this—how many lose not earth—but
heaven!

Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,
And seal their own to spare some wanton's
woe!

xvi

'Tis morn, and o'er his alter'd features
play 555

The beams—without the hope of yester-
day.

What shall he be ere night? perchance a
thing

O'er which the raven flaps her funeral
wing,

By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt;
While sets that sun, and dews of evening
melt, 560

Chill, wet, and misty round each stiffen'd
limb,

Refreshing earth—reviving all but him!

CANTO THE THIRD

'Come vedi—ancor non m'abbandona.'—DANTE.

I

SLOW sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;

Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely
bright,

But one unclouded blaze of living light!
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he
throws, 5

Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it
glows.

On old Ægina's rock and Idra's isle,
The god of gladness sheds his parting
smile;

O'er his own regions lingering, loves to
shine,

Though there his altars are no more
divine. 10

Descending fast the mountain shadows
kiss

Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long ex-
panse

More deeply purpled meet his mellowing
glance,

And tenderest tints, along their summits
driven, 15

Mark his gay course, and own the hues of
heaven;

Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast,
When—Athens! here thy Wisest look'd
his last. 20

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO III

How watch'd thy better sons his farewell
ray,
That closed their murder'd sage's latest
day!

Not yet—not yet—Sol pauses on the hill—
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes, 25
And dark the mountain's once delightful
dyes;

Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to
pour,
The land, where Phœbus never frown'd
before;

But ere he sank below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd—the spirit
fled;

The soul of him who scorn'd to fear or fly— 30
Who lived and died, as none can live or die!

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night asserts her silent reign.
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, nor girds her glowing
form; 36

With cornice glimmering as the moon-
beams play,
There the white column greets her grateful
ray,

And, bright around with quivering beams
beset,

Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive scatter'd dark and
wide 41

Where meek Cephissus pours his scanty
tide,

The cypress saddening by the sacred
mosque,

The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And, dun and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm, 46
All tinged with varied hues arrest the
eye—

And dull were his that pass'd them heed-
less by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental
war; 50

Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long array of sapphire and of gold,
Mix'd with the shades of many a distant
isle,

That frown—where gentler ocean seems
to smile.

II

Not now my theme—why turn my thoughts
to thee? 55

Oh! who can look along thy native sea,
Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the
tale,

So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
Who that beheld that Sun upon thee set,
Fair Athens! could thine evening face for-
get? 60

Not he—whose heart nor time nor dis-
tance frees,
Spell-bound within the clustering Cy-
clades!

Nor seems this homage foreign to its
strain,

His Corsair's isle was once thine own do-
main—

Would that with freedom it were thine
again! 65

III

The Sun hath sunk—and, darker than the
night,

Sinks with its beam upon the beacon
height

Medora's heart—the third day's come and
gone—

With it he comes not—sends not—faith-
less one!

The wind was fair though light; and storms
were none. 70

Last eve Anselmo's bark return'd, and
yet

His only tidings that they had not met!
Though wild, as now, far different were
the tale

Had Conrad waited for that single sail.

The night-breeze freshens—she that day
had pass'd 75

In watching all that Hope proclaim'd a
mast;

Sadly she sate on high—Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,

And there she wander'd, heedless of the
spray

That dash'd her garments oft, and warn'd
away: 80

She saw not, felt not this—nor dared de-
part,

Nor deem'd it cold—her chill was at her
heart;

Till grew such certainty from that sus-
pense—

His very sight had shock'd from life or
sense! 84

It came at last—a sad and shatter'd boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first

they sought;
Some bleeding—all most wretched—these
the few—

Scarce knew they how escaped—*this* all
they knew.

In silence, darkling, each appear'd to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's

fate: 90

Something they would have said; but
seem'd to fear

To trust their accents to Medora's ear.
She saw at once, yet sunk not—trembled
not—

Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot;

Within that meek fair form were feelings
high,
That deem'd not, till they found, their
energy.

While yet was Hope they soften'd, flutter'd,
wept—

All lost—that softness died not—but it
slept;

And o'er its slumber rose that Strength
which said,

'With nothing left to love, there's nought
to dread.'

'Tis more than nature's; like the burning
might

Delirium gathers from the fever's height.

'Silent you stand—nor would I hear you
tell

What—speak not—breathe not—for I
know it well—

Yet would I ask—almost my lip denies
The—quick your answer—tell me where

he lies.'

'Lady! we know not—scarce with life we
fled;

But here is one denies that he is dead;
He saw him bound; and bleeding—but

alive.'

She heard no further—'twas in vain to
strive—

So throb'd each vein—each thought—
till then withstood;

Her own dark soul—these words at once
subdued:

She totters—falls—and senseless had the
wave

Perchance but snatched her from another
grave,

But that with hands though rude, yet
weeping eyes,

They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the ocean dew,

Raise, fan, sustain—till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons

leave

That fainting form o'er which they gaze
and grieve;

Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious—when the triumph

short.

IV

In that wild council words wax'd warm
and strange

With thoughts of ransom, rescue, and re-
venge;

All, save repose or flight: still lingering
there

Breathed Conrad's spirit, and forbade
despair;

Whate'er his fate—the breasts he form'd
and led

Will save him living, or appease him dead.

Woe to his foes! there yet survive a few,
Whose deeds are daring, as their hearts
are true.

Within the Haram's secret chamber sate
Stern Seyd, still pondering o'er his Cap-
tive's fate;

His thoughts on love and hate alternate
dwell,

Now with Gulnare, and now in Conrad's
cell;

Here at his feet the lovely slave reclined
Surveys his brow—would soothe his gloom

of mind;

While many an anxious glance her large
dark eye

Sends in its idle search for sympathy,
His only bends in seeming o'er his beads,

But inly views his victim as he bleeds.
'Pacha! the day is thine; and on thy crest

Sits Triumph—Conrad taken—fall'n the
rest!

His doom is fix'd—he dies; and well his
fate

Was earn'd—yet much too worthless for
thy hate:

Methinks, a short release, for ransom
told

With all his treasure, not unwisely sold;
Report speaks largely of his pirate-

hoard—

Would that of this my Pacha were the
lord!

While baffled, weaken'd by this fatal
fray—

Watch'd—follow'd—he were then an
easier prey;

But once cut off—the remnant of his band
Embark their wealth, and seek a safer

strand.'

'Gulnare!—if for each drop of blood a
gem

Were offer'd rich as Stamboul's diadem;
If for each hair of his a massy mine

Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;
If all our Arab tales divulge or dream

Of wealth were here—that gold should not
redeem!

It had not now redeem'd a single hour,
But that I know him fetter'd, in my power;

And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
On pangs that longest rack, and latest kill.'

'Nay, Seyd! I seek not to restrain thy
rage,

Too justly moved for mercy to assuage;
My thoughts were only to secure for thee

His riches—thus released, he were not free:
Disabled, shorn of half his might and

band,
His capture could but wait thy first com-
mand.'

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO III

'His capture *could!*—and shall I then resign

One day to him—the wretch already mine?
Release my foe!—at whose remonstrance?
—thine! 171

Fair suitor!—to thy virtuous gratitude,
That thus repays this Giaour's relenting mood,

Which thee and thine alone of all could spare,

No doubt—regardless if the prize were fair, 175

My thanks and praise alike are due—now hear!

I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.

Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai— 180

Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?

Thou need'st not answer—thy confession speaks,

Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks;
Then, lovely dame, bethink thee! and beware: 184

'Tis not *his* life alone may claim such care!
Another word and—nay—I need no more.

Accursed was the moment when he bore
Thee from the flames, which better far—

but no—
I then had mourn'd thee with a lover's woe—

Now 'tis thy lord that warns—deceitful thing! 190

Know'st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?

In words alone I am not wont to chafe:
Look to thyself, nor deem thy falsehood safe!

He rose—and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,

Rage in his eye and threats in his adieu:
Ah! little reck'd that chief of womanhood— 196

Which frowns ne'er quell'd, nor menaces subdued;

And little deem'd he what thy heart, Gulnare!

When soft could feel, and when incensed could dare.

His doubts appear'd to wrong—nor yet she knew 200

How deep the root from whence compassion grew—

She was a slave—from such may captives claim

A fellow-feeling, differing but in name;
Still half unconscious—heedless of his wrath,

Again she ventured on the dangerous path, 205

Again his rage repell'd—until arose
That strife of thought, the source of woman's woes!

VI

Meanwhile, long, anxious, weary, still the same

Roll'd day and night: his soul could terror tame—

This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead, 211

When every step that echo'd by the gate,
Might entering lead where axe and stake await;

When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear;

Could terror tame—that spirit stern and high 216

Had proved unwilling as unfit to die;
'Twas worn—perhaps decay'd—yet silent bore

That conflict, deadlier far than all before:
The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale,

Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail; 221

But bound and fix'd in fetter'd solitude,
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;

To gaze on thine own heart; and meditate
Irrevocable faults, and coming fate—

Too late the last to shun—the first to mend— 226

To count the hours that struggle to thine end,

With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well;

Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot life's latest scene with calumny;

Before thee tortures, which the soul can dare,

Yet doubts how well the shrinking flesh may bear;

But deeply feels a single cry would shame—
To valour's praise thy last and dearest claim; 235

The life thou leav'st below, denied above
By kind monopolists of heavenly love;

And more than doubtful paradise—thy heaven

Of earthly hope—thy loved one from thee riven.

Such were the thoughts that outlaw must sustain, 240

And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
And those sustain'd he—boots it well or ill?

Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

The first day pass'd—he saw not her—
Gulnare—

The second, third—and still she came not there; 245

But what her words avouch'd, her charms
 had done,
 Or else he had not seen another sun.
 The fourth day roll'd along, and with the
 night
 Came storm and darkness in their ming-
 ling might. ²⁴⁹
 Oh! how he listen'd to the rushing deep,
 That ne'er till now so broke upon his sleep;
 And his wild spirit wilder wishes sent,
 Roused by the roar of his own element!
 Oft had he ridden on that winged wave,
 And loved its roughness for the speed it
 gave; ²⁵⁵
 And now its dashing echo'd on his ear,
 A long known voice—alas! too vainly near!
 Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly
 loud,
 Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-
 cloud;
 And flash'd the lightning by the latticed
 bar. ²⁶⁰
 To him more genial than the midnight star:
 Close to the glimmering grate he dragg'd
 his chain;
 And hoped *that* peril might not prove in
 vain.
 He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and
 pray'd
 One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
 His steel and impious prayer attract
 alike— ²⁶⁶
 The storm roll'd onward, and disdain'd to
 strike;
 Its peal wax'd fainter—ceased—he felt
 alone,
 As if some faithless friend had spurn'd his
 groan!

VIII

The midnight pass'd, and to the massy
 door ²⁷⁰
 A light step came—it paused—it moved
 once more;
 Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
 'Tis as his heart foreboded—that fair she!
 Whate'er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
 And beauteous still as hermit's hope can
 paint; ²⁷⁵
 Yet changed since last within that cell she
 came,
 More pale her cheek, more tremulous her
 frame:
 On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
 Which spoke before her accents—'Thou
 must die!
 Yes, thou must die—there is but one
 resource, ²⁸⁰
 The last—the worst—if torture were not
 worse.'

'Lady! I look to none; my lips proclaim
 What last proclaim'd they—Conrad still
 the same:

Why shouldst thou seek an outlaw's life to
 spare,
 And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
 Well have I earn'd—nor here alone—the
 meed ²⁸⁶
 Of Seyd's revenge, by many a lawless
 deed.'

'Why should I seek? because—Oh! didst
 thou not
 Redeem my life from worse than slavery's
 lot?

Why should I seek?—hath misery made
 thee blind ²⁹⁰
 To the fond workings of a woman's mind?
 And must I say?—albeit my heart rebel
 With all that woman feels, but should not
 tell—

Because, despite thy crimes, that heart is
 moved:

It fear'd thee, thank'd thee, pitied, mad-
 den'd, loved. ²⁹⁵

Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
 Thou lov'st another, and I love in vain:
 Though fond as mine her bosom, form
 more fair,

I rush through peril which she would not
 dare.

If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
 Were I thine own thou wert not lonely
 here: ³⁰¹

An outlaw's spouse and leave her lord to
 roam!

What hath such gentle dame to do with
 home?

But speak not now—o'er thine and o'er
 my head

Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread;
 If thou hast courage still, and wouldst be
 free, ³⁰⁶

Receive this poniard—rise and follow me!

'Ay—in my chains! my steps will gently
 tread,

With these adornments, o'er each slumber-
 ing head! ³⁰⁹

Thou hast forgot—is this a garb for flight?
 Or is that instrument more fit for fight?'

'Misdoubting Corsair! I have gain'd the
 guard,

Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
 A single word of mine removes that chain:

Without some aid how here could I re-
 main? ³¹⁵

Well, since we met, hath sped my busy
 time,

If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime:
 The crime—'tis none to punish those of
 Seyd.

That hated tyrant, Conrad—he must
 bleed!

I see thee shudder, but my soul is changed—
 Wrong'd, spurn'd, reviled, and it shall be
 avenged— ³²¹

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO III

Accused of what till now my heart disdain'd—

Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chain'd.

Yes, smile!—but he had little cause to sneer,

I was not treacherous then, nor thou too dear:

But he has said it—and the jealous well—
Those tyrants, teasing, tempting to rebel—

Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell.
I never loved—he bought me—somewhat high—

Since with me came a heart he could not buy.

I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
But for his rescue I with thee had fled.

'Twas false thou know'st—but let such augurs rue,

Their words are omens insult renders true.
Nor was thy respite granted to my prayer;

This fleeting grace was only to prepare
New torments for thy life, and my despair.

Mine too he threatens; but his dotage still
Would fain reserve me for his lordly will:

When wearier of these fleeting charms and me,

There yawns the sack, and yonder rolls the sea!

What, am I then a toy for dotard's play,
To wear but till the gilding frets away?

I saw thee—loved thee—owe thee all—
would save,

If but to show how grateful is a slave.
But had he not thus menaced fame and life—

(And well he keeps his oaths pronounced
in strife)—

I still had saved thee, but the Pacha spared.
Now I am all thine own, for all prepared:

Thou lov'st me not, nor know'st—or but the worst.

Alas! *this* love—that hatred—are the first—

Oh! couldst thou prove my truth, thou wouldst not start,

Nor fear the fire that lights an Eastern heart;
'Tis now the beacon of thy safety—now

It points within the port a Mainote prow:
But in one chamber, where our path must lead,

There sleeps—he must not wake—the oppressor Seyd!

'Gulnare—Gulnare—I never felt till now
My abject fortune, wither'd fame so low:

Seyd is mine enemy; had swept my band
From earth with ruthless but with open hand,

And therefore came I, in my bark of war,
To smite the smiter with the scimitar;

Such is my weapon—not the secret knife;
Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life.

Thine saved I gladly, Lady—not for this;
Let me not deem that mercy shown amiss.

Now fare thee well—more peace be with
thy breast!

Night wears apace, my last of earthly rest!

'Rest! rest! by sunrise must thy sinews
shake,

And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake.

I heard the order—saw—I will not see—
If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.

My life, my love, my hatred—all below
Are on this cast—Corsair! 'tis but a blow!

Without it flight were idle—how evade
His sure pursuit?—my wrongs too unrepaid,

My youth disgraced, the long, long wasted years,

One blow shall cancel with our future fears;

But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,

I'll try the firmness of a female hand.

The guards are gain'd—one moment all were o'er—

Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;
If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud

Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud.

IX

She turn'd, and vanish'd ere he could reply,

But his glance follow'd far with eager eye;
And gathering, as he could, the links that bound

His form, to curl their length, and curb their sound,

Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,

He, fast as fetter'd limbs allow, pursued.
'Twas dark and winding, and he knew not where

That passage led; nor lamp nor guard was there:

He sees a dusky glimmering—shall he seek
Or shun that ray so indistinct and weak?

Chance guides his steps—a freshness seems to bear

Full on his brow, as if from morning air;
He reach'd an open gallery—on his eye

Gleam'd the last star of night, the clearing sky:

Yet scarcely heeded these—another light
From a lone chamber struck upon his sight.

Towards it he moved; a scarcely closing door

Reveal'd the ray within, but nothing more.
With hasty step a figure outward pass'd;

Then paused, and turn'd—and paused—
'tis she at last!

No poniard in that hand, nor sign of ill—
 'Thanks to that softening heart—she
 could not kill!'

Again he look'd, the wildness of her eye
 Starts from the day abrupt and fearfully.
 She stopp'd—threw back her dark far-
 floating hair,

That nearly veil'd her face and bosom fair,⁴¹⁰
 As if she late had bent her leaning head
 Above some object of her doubt or dread.
 They meet—upon her brow—unknown,
 forgot—

Her hurrying hand had left—'twas but a
 spot—⁴¹⁵

Its hue was all he saw, and scarce with-
 stood—

Oh! slight but certain pledge of crime—
 'tis blood!

X

He had seen battle—he had brooded lone
 O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt
 foreshown;

He had been tempted, chasten'd, and the
 chain⁴²⁰

Yet on his arms might ever there remain:
 But ne'er from strife, captivity, remorse—
 From all his feelings in their inmost
 force—

So thrill'd, so shudder'd every creeping
 vein,

As now they froze before that purple stain.
 That spot of blood, that light but guilty
 streak,⁴²⁶

Had banish'd all the beauty from her
 cheek!

Blood he had view'd, could view un-
 moved—but then

It flow'd in combat, or was shed by men!

XI

'Tis done—he nearly waked—but it is
 done.⁴³⁰

Corsair! he perish'd—thou art dearly won.
 All words would now be vain—away—
 away!

Our bark is tossing—'tis already day.
 The few gain'd over, now are wholly mine,
 And these thy yet surviving band shall
 join:

Anon my voice shall vindicate my hand,⁴³⁵
 When once our sail forsakes this hated
 strand.'

XII

She clapp'd her hands, and through the
 gallery pour,

Equipp'd for flight, her vassals—Greek
 and Moor;

Silent but quick they stoop, his chains un-
 bind;⁴⁴⁰

Once more his limbs are free as mountain
 wind!

But on his heavy heart such sadness sate,
 As if they there transferr'd that iron
 weight.

No words are utter'd—at her sign, a door
 Reveals the secret passage to the shore:

The city lies behind—they speed, they
 reach⁴⁴⁶

The glad waves dancing on the yellow
 beach;

And Conrad following, at her beck, obey'd,
 Nor cared he now if rescued or betray'd;

Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
 Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

XIII

Embark'd, the sail unfurl'd, the light
 breeze blew—

How much had Conrad's memory to re-
 view!

Sunk he in contemplation, till the cape
 Where last he anchor'd rear'd its giant
 shape.

Ah! since that fatal night, though brief the
 time,

Had swept an age of terror, grief, and
 crime.

As its far shadow frown'd above the mast,
 He veil'd his face, and sorrow'd as he
 pass'd;

He thought of all—Gonsalvo and his
 band,⁴⁶⁰

His fleeting triumph and his failing hand;
 He thought on her afar, his lonely bride:

He turn'd and saw—Gulnare, the homi-
 cide!

XIV

She watch'd his features till she could not
 bear⁴⁶⁴

Their freezing aspect and averted air;
 And that strange fierceness, foreign to her
 eye,

Fell quench'd in tears, too late to shed or
 dry.

She knelt beside him and his hand she
 press'd,

'Thou may'st forgive, though Allah's self
 detest;

But for that deed of darkness what wert
 thou?⁴⁷⁰

Reproach me—but not yet—Oh! spare me
 now!

I am not what I seem—this fearful night
 My brain bewilder'd—do not madden
 quite!

If I had never loved, though less my guilt,
 Thou hadst not lived to—hate me—if thou
 wilt.⁴⁷⁵

XV

She wrongs his thoughts, they more him-
 self upbraid

Than her, though undesign'd, the wretch
 he made;

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO III]

But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexpressed,
They bleed within that silent cell—their breast.

Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge;

Far on the horizon's verge appears a speck,
A spot—a mast—a sail—an armed deck!
Their little bark her men of watch descried,
And ampler canvas woos the wind from high;

She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier;
A flash is seen—the ball beyond their bow
Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.

Uprose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance;
‘Tis mine—my blood-red flag! again—again—

I am not all deserted on the main!
They own the signal, answer to the hail,
Hoist out the boat at once, and slacken sail.

‘Tis Conrad! Conrad!’ shouting from the deck,
Command nor duty could their transport check!

With light alacrity and gaze of pride,
They view him mount once more his vessel's side;

A smile relaxing in each rugged face,
Their arms can scarce forbear a rough embrace.

He, half forgetting danger and defeat,
Returns their greeting as a chief may greet,
Wrings with a cordial grasp Anselmo's hand,

And feels he yet can conquer and command!

XVI

These greetings o'er, the feelings that o'erflow,

Yet grieve to win him back without a blow;

They sail'd prepared for vengeance—had they known

A woman's hand secured that deed her own,

She were their queen—less scrupulous are they

Than haughty Conrad how they win their way.

With many an asking smile, and wondering stare,

They whisper round, and gaze upon Gulnare;

And her—at once above—beneath her sex,

Whom blood appall'd not, their regards perplex.

515

To Conrad turns her faint imploring eye,
She drops her veil, and stands in silence by;

Her arms are meekly folded on that breast,
Which—Conrad safe—to fate resign'd the rest.

Though worse than frenzy could that bosom fill,

Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
The worst of crimes had left her woman still!

XVII

This Conrad mark'd, and felt—ah! could he less?—

Hate of that deed, but grief for her distress;

What she has done no tears can wash away,

And Heaven must punish on its angry day:

But—it was done: he knew, whate'er her guilt,

For him that poniard smote, that blood was spilt;

And he was free! and she for him had given

Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven!

And now he turn'd him to that dark-eyed slave

Whose brow was bow'd beneath the glance he gave,

Who now seem'd changed and humbled, faint and meek,

But varying oft the colour of her cheek
To deeper shades of paleness—all its red

That fearful spot which stain'd it from the dead!

He took that hand—it trembled—now too late—

So soft in love, so wildly nerved in hate;
He clasp'd that hand—it trembled—and his own

Had lost its firmness, and his voice its tone.

‘Gulnare!’—but she replied not—‘dear Gulnare!’

She raised her eye—her only answer there—

At once she sought and sunk in his embrace:

If he had driven her from that resting-place,

His had been more or less than mortal heart,

But—good or ill—it bade her not depart.

Perchance, but for the bodings of his breast,

His latest virtue then had join'd the rest.
Yet even Medora might forgive the kiss

That ask'd from form so fair no more than this,

520

The first, the last that Frailty stole from
Faith—

To lips where Love had lavish'd all his
breath,

To lips—whose broken sighs such frag-
rance fling,

As he had fann'd them freshly with his
wing!

XVIII

They gain by twilight's hour their lonely
isle.

To them the very rocks appear to smile;
The haven hums with many a cheering

sound,
The beacons blaze their wonted stations

round,
The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
And sportive dolphins bend them through

the spray;

Even the hoarse sea-bird's shrill, dis-
cordant shriek

Greets like the welcome of his tuneless
beak!

Beneath each lamp that through its lattice
gleams,

Their fancy paints the friends that trim
the beams.

Oh! what can sanctify the joys of home,
Like Hope's gay glance from Ocean's

troubled foam?

XIX

The lights are high on beacon and from
bower,

And 'midst them Conrad seeks Medora's
tower:

He looks in vain—'tis strange—and all
remark,

Amid so many, hers alone is dark.

'Tis strange—of yore its welcome never
fail'd,

Nor now, perchance, extinguish'd, only
veil'd.

With the first boat descends he for the
shore,

And looks impatient on the lingering oar.
Oh! for a wing beyond the falcon's flight,

To bear him like an arrow to that height!
With the first pause the resting rowers

gave,
He waits not, looks not—leaps into the

wave,
Strives through the surge, bestrides the

beach, and high
Ascends the path familiar to his eye.

He reach'd his turret door—he paused—
no sound

Broke from within; and all was night
around.

He knock'd, and loudly—footstep nor
reply

Announced that any heard or deem'd him
nigh;

He knock'd, but faintly—for his trembling
hand

Refused to aid his heavy heart's demand.
The portal opens—'tis a well-known face,

But not the form he panted to embrace.
Its lips are silent—twice his own essay'd,

And fail'd to frame the question they
delay'd;

He snatch'd the lamp—its light will answer
all—

It quits his grasp, expiring in the fall.
He would not wait for that reviving ray—

As soon could he have linger'd there for
day;

But, glimmering through the dusky cor-
ridor,

Another chequers o'er the shadow'd floor;
His steps the chamber gain—his eyes be-

hold
All that his heart believed not—yet fore-
told!

XX

He turn'd not—spoke not—sunk not—
fix'd his look,

And set the anxious frame that lately
shook:

He gazed—how long we gaze despite of
pain,

And know, but dare not own, we gaze in
vain!

In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death with gentler aspect wither'd

there;
And the cold flowers her colder hand con-
tain'd,

In that last grasp as tenderly were strain'd
As if she scarcely felt, but feign'd a sleep,

And made it almost mockery yet to weep:
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of

snow,
And veil'd—thought shrinks from all that
lurk'd below—

Oh! o'er the eye Death most exerts his
might,

And hurls the spirit from her throne of
light;

Sinks those blue orbs in that long last
eclipse,

But spares, as yet, the charm around her
lips—

Yet, yet they seem as they forbore to
smile,

And wish'd repose,—but only for a while;
But the white shroud, and each extended

treas,
Long, fair—but spread in utter lifeless-
ness,

Which, late the sport of every summer wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to

bind;
These—and the pale pure cheek, became
the bier—

But she is nothing—wherefore is he here?

THE CORSAIR

[CANTO III

XXI

He ask'd no question—all were answer'd
 now
 By the first glance on that still, marble
 brow.
 It was enough—she died—what reck'd it
 the love? 625
 The love of youth, the hope of better
 years,
 The source of softest wishes, tenderest
 fears,
 The only living thing he could not hate,
 Was reft at once—and he deserved his
 fate,
 But did not feel it less;—the good ex-
 plore, 630
 For peace, those realms where guilt can
 never soar:
 The proud, the wayward—who have fix'd
 below
 Their joy, and find this earth enough for
 woe,
 Lose in that one their all—perchance a
 mite—
 But who in patience parts with all de-
 light? 635
 Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern
 Mask hearts where grief hath little left to
 learn;
 And many a withering thought lies hid,
 not lost,
 In smiles that least befit who wear them
 most. 639

XXII

By those, that deepest feel, is ill exprest
 The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
 Where thousand thoughts begin to end in
 one,
 Which seeks from all the refuge found in
 none;
 No words suffice the secret soul to show,
 For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
 On Conrad's stricken soul exhaustion
 prest, 646
 And stupor almost lull'd it into rest;
 So feeble now—his mother's softness crept
 To those wild eyes, which like an infant's
 wept:
 It was the very weakness of his brain,
 Which thus confess'd without relieving
 pain. 651
 None saw his trickling tears—perchance,
 if seen,
 That useless flood of grief had never been:
 Nor long they flow'd—he dried them to
 depart,
 In helpless—hopeless—brokenness of
 heart: 655
 The sun goes forth, but Conrad's day is
 dim;
 And the night cometh—ne'er to pass from
 him.

There is no darkness like the cloud of
 mind,
 On Grief's vain eye—the blindest of the
 blind!
 Which may not—dare not see—but turns
 aside 660
 To blackest shade—nor will endure a
 guide!

XXIII

His heart was form'd for softness—warp'd
 to wrong;
 Betray'd too early, and beguiled too long;
 Each feeling pure—as falls the dropping
 dew
 Within the grot—like that had harden'd
 too; 665
 Less clear, perchance, its earthly trials
 pass'd,
 But sunk, and chill'd, and petrified at last.
 Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves
 the rock;
 If such his heart, so shatter'd it the
 shock.
 There grew one flower beneath its rugged
 brow, 670
 Though dark the shade—it shelter'd—
 saved till now.
 The thunder came—that bolt hath blasted
 both,
 The Granite's firmness, and the Lily's
 growth:
 The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
 Its tale, but shrunk and wither'd where it
 fell; 675
 And of its cold protector, blacken round
 But shiver'd fragments on the barren
 ground!

XXIV

'Tis morn—to venture on his lonely
 hour
 Few dare; though now Anselmo sought
 his tower.
 He was not there, nor seen along the
 shore; 680
 Ere night, alarm'd, their isle is traversed
 o'er:
 Another morn—another bids them seek,
 And shout his name till echo waxeth
 weak;
 Mount, grotto, cavern, valley search'd in
 vain,
 They find on shore a sea-boat's broken
 chain: 685
 Their hope revives—they follow o'er the
 main.
 'Tis idle all—moons roll on moons away,
 And Conrad comes not, came not since
 that day:
 Nor trace, nor tidings of his doom de-
 clare
 Where lives his grief, or perish'd his
 despair! 690

Long mourn'd his band whom none could
mourn beside;
And fair the monument they gave his
bride;
For him they raise not the recording
stone—

His death yet dubious, deeds too widely
known;
He left a Corsair's name to other
times,
Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand
crimes.

LARA

CANTO THE FIRST

I

THE Serfs are glad through Lara's wide
domain,
And Slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhop'd, but unforgotten lord,
The long self-exiled chieftain, is restored:
There be bright faces in the busy hall, 5
Bowls on the board, and banners on the
wall;
Far checking o'er the pictured window,
plays
The unwonted faggot's hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather round the
hearth,
With tongues all loudness, and with eyes
all mirth. 10

II

The chief of Lara is returned again:
And why had Lara cross'd the bounding
main?
Left by his sire, too young such loss to
know,
Lord of himself,—that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human
breast 15
But holds to rob the heart within of rest!—
With none to check, and few to point in
time
The thousand paths that slope the way to
crime;
Then, when he most required command-
ment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood govern'd
men. 20
It skills not, boots not step by step to
trace
His youth through all the mazes of its
race;
Short was the course his restlessness had
run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III

And Lara left in youth his father-land;
But from the hour he waved his parting
hand 25
Each trace wax'd fainter of his course, till
all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.

His sire was dust, his vassals could de-
clare,
'Twas all they knew, that Lara was not
there; 30
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture
grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted
name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had
died; 36
'Yet doth he live!' exclaims the impatient
heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not
wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy

The Laras' last and longest dwelling-
place; 40
But one is absent from the mouldering
file,
That now were welcome in that Gothic
pile.

IV

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they
need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greet-
ing's o'er, 45
Not that he came, but came not long
before:
No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect, and of tender age.
Years had roll'd on, and fast they speed
away
To those that wander as to those that
stay; 50
But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.
They see, they recognise, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his manhood's
prime, 55
Though sear'd by toil, and something
touch'd by time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce
forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;

Nor good nor ill of late were known, his
name

Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame:
His soul in youth was haughty, but his
sins 61

No more than pleasure from the stripling
wins;

And such, if not yet harden'd in their
course,

Might be redeem'd, nor ask a long re-
morse.

V

And they indeed were changed—'tis
quickly seen, 65

Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had
been:

That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at
last,

And spake of passions, but of passion
past:

The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of
praise; 70

A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single
look;

And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath
stung,

That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own
the wound; 76

All these seem'd his, and something more
beneath

Than glance could well reveal, or accent
breathe.

Ambition, glory, love, the common aim,
That some can conquer, and that all would
claim, 80

Within his breast appear'd no more to
strive,

Yet seem'd as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to
trace

At moments lighten'd o'er his livid face.

VI

Not much he loved long question of the
past, 85

Nor told of wondrous wilds, and deserts
vast,

In those far lands where he had wander'd
lone,

And—as himself would have it seem—un-
known;

Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely
scan,

Nor glean experience from his fellow
man; 90

But what he had beheld he shunn'd to
show,

As hardly worth a stranger's care to
know;

If still more prying such inquiry grew,
His brow fell darker, and his words more
few.

VII

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of
men; 96

Born of high lineage, link'd in high com-
mand,

He mingled with the magnates of his land;
Join'd the carousals of the great and
gay,

And saw them smile or sigh their hours
away; 100

But still he only saw, and did not share,
The common pleasure or the general care;

He did not follow what they all pursued
With hope still baffled, still to be renew'd;

Nor shadowy honour, nor substantial
gain, 105

Nor beauty's preference, and the rival's
pain:

Around him some mysterious circle
thrown

Repell'd approach, and show'd him still
alone;

Upon his eye sat something of reproof,
That kept at least frivolity aloof; 110

And things more timid that beheld him
near

In silence gazed, or whisper'd mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few con-
fess'd

They deem'd him better than his air ex-
press'd.

VIII

'Twas strange—in youth all action and all
life, 115

Burning for pleasure, not averse from
strife;

Woman, the field, the ocean, all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,

In turn he tried—he ransack'd all be-
low,

And found his recompense in joy or woe,
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings
sought 121

In that intensesness an escape from thought:
The tempest of his heart in scorn had
gazed

On that the feebler elements had raised;
The rapture of his heart had look'd on
high, 125

And ask'd if greater dwelt beyond the
sky:

Chain'd to excess, the slave of each ex-
treme,

How woke he from the wildness of that
dream?

Alas! he told not—but he did awake
To curse the wither'd heart that would not
break. 130

Books, for his volume heretofore was
Man,

With eye more curious he appear'd to
scan,

And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day,
From all communion he would start
away;

And then, his rarely call'd attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound
his hurried tread 136

O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers
frown'd

In rude but antique portraiture around:
They heard, but whisper'd—'that must
not be known—

The sound of words less earthly than his
own. 140

Yes, they who chose might smile, but some
had seen

They scarce knew what, but more than
should have been.

Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
Which hands profane had gather'd from
the dead,

That still beside his open'd volume lay,
As if to startle all save him away? 146

Why slept he not when others were at rest?
Why heard no music, and received no
guest?

All was not well, they deem'd—but where
the wrong?

Some knew perchance—but 'twere a tale
too long; 150

And such besides were too discreetly wise,
To more than hint their knowledge in sur-
mise;

But if they would—they could'—around
the board

Thus Lara's vassals prattled of their lord.

It was the night—and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged
beam; 156

So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the
sky: 160

Its banks are fringed with many a goodly
tree,

And flowers the fairest that may feast the
bee;

Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.

These deck the shore; the waves their
channel make 165

In windings bright and mazy like the
snake.

All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit
there;

Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night!
It was a moment only for the good: 171
So Lara deem'd, nor longer there he stood,
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate;
Such scene his soul no more could con-
template:

Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer
blaze, 176

Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts
that now—

No—no—the storm may beat upon his
brow,

Unfelt, unsparing—but a night like this,
A night of beauty, mock'd such breast as
his. 180

He turn'd within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall:
There were the painted forms of other
times,

'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy
vaults 185

That hid their dust, their foibles, and their
faults;

And half a column of the pompous page,
That speeds the specious tale from age to
age;

Where history's pen its praise or blame
supplies,

And lies like truth, and still most truly
lies. 190

He wandering mused, and as the moon-
beam shone

Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of
stone,

And the high fretted roof, and saints, that
there

O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured
prayer,

Reflected in fantastic figures grew, 195
Like life, but not like mortal life to view:

His bristling locks of sable, brow of
gloom,

And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and
gave

His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

XII

'Twas midnight—all was slumber; the
lone light 201

Dimm'd in the lamp, as loth to break the
night.

Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's
hall—

A sound, a voice, a shriek, a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek—and silence—did
they hear 205

That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?

They heard and rose, and, tremulously
 brave,
 Rush where the sound invoked their aid
 to save;
 They come with half-lit tapers in their
 hands,
 And snatch'd in startled haste unbelted
 brands. 210

XIII

Cold as the marble where his length was
 laid,
 Pale as the beam that o'er his features
 play'd,
 Was Lara stretch'd; his half-drawn sabre
 near,
 Dropp'd it should seem in more than
 nature's fear;
 Yet he was firm, or had been firm till
 now, 215
 And still defiance knit his gather'd brow;
 Though mix'd with terror, senseless as he
 lay,
 There lived upon his lip the wish to slay;
 Some half-form'd threat in utterance there
 had died, 219
 Some imprecation of despairing pride;
 His eye was almost seal'd, but not forsook,
 Even in its trance, the gladiator's look,
 That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
 And now was fix'd in horrible repose.
 They raise him—bear him:—hush! he
 breathes, he speaks, 225
 The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks,
 His lip resumes its red, his eye, though
 dim,
 Rolls wide and wild, each slowly quivering
 limb
 Recalls its function, but his words are
 strung
 In terms that seem not of his native
 tongue; 230
 Distinct but strange, enough they under-
 stand
 To deem them accents of another land;
 And such they were, and meant to meet an
 ear
 That hears him not—alas! that cannot
 hear!

XIV

His page approach'd, and he alone ap-
 pear'd 235
 To know the import of the words they
 heard;
 And, by the changes of his cheek and
 brow,
 They were not such as Lara should avow,
 Nor he interpret,—yet with less surprise
 Than those around their chieftain's state
 he eyes, 240
 But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
 And in that tongue which seem'd his own
 replied,

And Lara heeds those tones that gently
 seem
 To soothe away the horrors of his dream—
 If dream it were that thus could over-
 throw 245
 A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV

Whate'er his frenzy dream'd or eye be-
 held,—
 If yet remember'd ne'er to be reveal'd,—
 Rests at his heart: the custom'd morning
 came,
 And breathed new vigour in his shaken
 frame; 250
 And solace sought he none from priest
 nor leech,
 And soon the same in movement and in
 speech,
 As heretofore he fill'd the passing hours,
 Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead
 lowers,
 Than these were wont; and if the coming
 night 255
 Appear'd less welcome now to Lara's sight,
 He to his marvelling vassals show'd it not,
 Whose shuddering proved *their* fear was
 less forgot.
 In trembling pairs (alone they dared not)
 crawl
 The astonish'd slaves, and shun the fated
 hall; 260
 The waving banner, and the clapping
 door,
 The rustling tapestry, and the echoing
 floor;
 The long dim shadows of surrounding
 trees,
 The flapping bat, the night song of the
 breeze;
 Aught they behold or hear their thought
 appals, 265
 As evenings saddens o'er the dark grey walls.

XVI

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er un-
 ravell'd gloom
 Came not again, or Lara could assume
 A seeming of forgetfulness, that made
 His vassals more amazed nor less afraid.
 Had memory vanish'd then with sense re-
 stored? 271
 Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their
 lord
 Betray'd a feeling that recall'd to these
 That fever'd moment of his mind's disease.
 Was it a dream? was his the voice that
 spoke 275
 Those strange wild accents; his the cry
 that broke
 Their slumber? his the oppress'd, o'er-
 labour'd heart
 That ceased to beat, the look that made
 them start?

Could he who thus had suffer'd so forget,
When such as saw that suffering shudder
yet? ²⁸⁰

Or did that silence prove his memory fix'd
Too deep for words, indelible, unmix'd
In that corroding secrecy which gnaws
The heart to show the effect, but not the
cause?

Not so in him; his breast had buried
both, ²⁸⁵

Nor common gazers could discern the
growth

Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave
half told;

They choke the feeble words that would
unfold.

XVII

In him inexplicably mix'd appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and
fear'd; ²⁹⁰

Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
His silence form'd a theme for others'
prate—

They guess'd, they gazed, they fain would
know his fate.

What had he been? what was he, thus un-
known, ²⁹⁵

Who walk'd their world, his lineage only
known?

A hater of his kind? yet some would

With he could seem gay amidst the
gay;

But own'd that smile, if oft observed and
near,

Waned in its mirth, and wither'd to a
sneer; ³⁰⁰

That smile might reach his lip, but pass'd
not by,

None e'er could trace its laughter to his
eye:

Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his spirit seem'd to
chide ³⁰⁵

Such weakness, as unworthy of its pride,
And steel'd itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half-withheld
esteem;

In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which tenderness might once have wrung
from rest; ³¹⁰

In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could be-
fall,

He stood a stranger in this breathing
world, ³¹⁵

An erring spirit from another hurl'd;

A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped;
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory
yet

His mind would half exult and half re-
gret: ³²⁰

With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and
birth,

His early dreams of good outstripp'd the
truth,

And troubled manhood follow'd baffled
youth;

With thought of years in phantom chase
mis-spent, ³²⁵

And wasted powers for better purpose lent;
And fiery passions that had pour'd their
wrath

In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife

In wild reflection o'er his stormy life;
But haughty still, and loth himself to blame,

He call'd on Nature's self to share the
shame,

And charged all faults upon the fleshly
form

She gave to clog the soul, and feast the
worm; ³³⁴

Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will:

Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,

But not in pity, not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,

That sway'd him onward with a secret
pride ³⁴¹

To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting
time,

Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soar'd beyond, or sunk be-
neath, ³⁴⁵

The men with whom he felt condemn'd to
breathe,

And long'd by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal
state; ³⁵⁰

His mind abhorring this, had fix'd her
throne

Far from the world, in regions of her
own;

Thus coldly passing all that pass'd below,
His blood in temperate seeming now
would flow:

Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had
glow'd,

But ever in that icy smoothness flow'd!
'Tis true, with other men their path he
walk'd, ³⁵⁵

And like the rest in seeming did and talk'd,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor
start,

His madness was not of the head, but
heart;

And rarely wander'd in his speech, or
 drew
 His thoughts so forth as to offend the
 view. 360

XIX

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
 And seeming gladness to remain unseen,
 He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an
 art
 Of fixing memory on another's heart:
 It was not love perchance, nor hate, nor
 aught 365
 That words can image to express the
 thought;
 But they who saw him did not see in vain,
 And once beheld, would ask of him again:
 And those to whom he spake remember'd
 well,
 And on the words, however light, would
 dwell: 370
 None knew nor how, nor why, but he en-
 twined
 Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
 There he was stamp'd, in liking, or in hate,
 If greeted once; however brief the date
 That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
 Still there within the inmost thought he
 grew. 376
 You could not penetrate his soul, but
 found,
 Despite your wonder, to your own he
 wound;
 His presence haunted still; and from the
 breast
 He forced an all unwilling interest: 380
 Vain was the struggle in that mental net,
 His spirit seem'd to dare you to forget!

XX

There is a festival, where knights and
 dames,
 And aught that wealth or lofty lineage
 claims,
 Appear—a high-born and a welcome
 guest 385
 To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
 The long carousal shakes the illumined
 hall,
 Well speeds alike the banquet and the
 ball;
 And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's
 train
 Links grace and harmony in happiest
 chain: 390
 Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
 That mingle there in well according bands;
 It is a sight the careful brow might smooth,
 And make Age smile, and dream itself to
 youth,
 And Youth forget such hour was past on
 earth, 395
 So springs the exulting bosom to that
 mirth!

And Lara gazed on these, sedately
 His brow belied him if his soul was
 And his glance follow'd fast each fluttering
 fair,
 Whose steps of lightness woke no echo
 there: 400
 He lean'd against the lofty pillar nigh,
 With folded arms and long attentive eye,
 Nor mark'd a glance so sternly fix'd on
 his—
 Ill brook'd high Lara scrutiny like this:
 At length he caught it, 'tis a face un-
 known, 405
 But seems as searching his, and his alone;
 Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
 Who still till now had gazed on him un-
 seen:
 At length encountering meets the mutual
 gaze 409
 Of keen inquiry, and of mute amaze;
 On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
 As if distrusting that the stranger threw;
 Along the stranger's aspect, fix'd and
 stern,
 Flash'd more than thence the vulgar eye
 could learn.

"Tis he!" the stranger cried, and those
 that heard 415
 Re-echoed fast and far the whisper'd
 word.
 "Tis he!"—"Tis who?" they question far
 and near,
 Till louder accents rung on Lara's ear;
 So widely spread, few bosoms well could
 brook
 The general marvel, or that single look:
 But Lara stirr'd not, changed not, the sur-
 prise 421
 That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
 Seem'd now subsided, neither sunk nor
 raised
 Glanced his eye round, though still the
 stranger gazed;
 And drawing nigh, exclaim'd, with
 haughty sneer, 425
 "Tis he! how came he thence?—what
 doth he here?"

It were too much for Lara to pass by
 Such questions, so repeated fierce and
 high;
 With look collected, but with accent cold,
 More mildly firm than petulantly bold,
 He turn'd, and met the inquisitorial tone—
 'My name is Lara!—when thine own is
 known, 432
 Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
 The unlook'd-for courtesy of such a
 knight.

'Tis Lara!—further wouldst thou mark
or ask? ⁴³⁵
I shun no question, and I wear no mask.'

'Thou shunn'st no question! Ponder—is
there none
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear
would shun?
And deem'st thou me unknown too?
Gaze again!

At least thy memory was not given in
vain, ⁴⁴⁰
Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt,
Eternity forbids thee to forget.'

With slow and searching glance upon his
face

Grew Lara's eyes, but nothing there could
trace

They knew, or chose to know—with
dubious look ⁴⁴⁵

He deign'd no answer, but his head he
shook,

And half contemptuous turn'd to pass
away;

But the stern stranger motion'd him to
stay.

'A word!—I charge thee stay, and answer
here

To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy
peer, ⁴⁵⁰

But as thou wast and art—nay, frown not,
lord,

If false, 'tis easy to disprove the word—
But as thou wast and art, on thee looks
down,

Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy
frown.

Art thou not he? whose deeds——'
'Whate'er I be,

Words wild as these, accusers like to
thee, ⁴⁵⁶

I list no further; those with whom they
weigh

May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay
The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue
can tell,

Which thus begins so courteously and
well. ⁴⁶⁰

Let Otho cherish here his polish'd guest,
To him my thanks and thoughts shall be
express'd.'

And here their wondering host hath inter-
posed—

'Whate'er there be between you undis-
closed, ⁴⁶⁴

This is no time nor fitting place to mar
The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.

If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast aught to show
Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,

To-morrow, here, or elsewhere, as may
best

Beesem your mutual judgment, speak the
rest; ⁴⁷⁰

I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,

Though, like Count Lara, now return'd
alone

From other lands, almost a stranger
grown;

And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
I augur right of courage and of worth,

He will not that untainted line belie, ⁴⁷⁶
Nor aught that knighthood may accord,
deny.'

'To-morrow be it,' Ezzelin replied,
'And here our several worth and truth be
tried;

I gage my life, my falchion to attest ⁴⁸⁰
My words, so may I mingle with the blest!'

What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk;

The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gather'd, seem'd on him
to fall; ⁴⁸⁵

But his were silent, his appear'd to stray
In far forgetfulness away—away—

Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV

'To-morrow!—ay, to-morrow!' further
word ⁴⁹⁰

Than those repeated none from Lara
heard:

Upon his brow no outward passion spoke;
From his large eye no flashing anger broke;

Yet there was something fix'd in that low
tone,

Which show'd resolve, determined, though
unknown. ⁴⁹⁵

He seized his cloak—his head he slightly
bow'd,

And passing Ezzelin, he left the crowd;
And as he pass'd him, smiling met the
frown

With which that chieftain's brow would
bear him down:

It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling
pride ⁵⁰⁰

That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot
hide;

But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.

Could this mean peace? the calmness of
the good?

Or guilt grown old in desperate hardi-
hood? ⁵⁰⁵

Alas! too like in confidence are each,
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;

From deeds, and deeds alone, may he dis-
cern

Truths which it wrings the unpractised
heart to learn.

And Lara call'd his page, and went his
way— ⁵¹⁰

Well could that stripling word or sign obey:

LARA

[CANTO I

His only follower from those climes afar,
Where the soul glows beneath a brighter
star;

For Lara left the shore from whence he
sprung,

In duty patient, and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his faith appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's
land,

In such from him he rarely heard com-
mand;

But fleet his step, and clear his tones
would come,

When Lara's lip breathed forth the words
of home:

Those accents, as his native mountains
dear,

Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends', kindred's, parents' wonted voice
recall,

Now lost, abjured, for one—his friend, his
all:

For him earth now disclosed no other
guide;

What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had
sate,

But had not marr'd, though in his beams
he grew,

The cheek where oft the unbidden blush
shone through;

Yet not such blush as mounts when health
would show

All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;
But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care

That for a burning moment fever'd there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seem'd
caught

From high, and lighten'd with electric
thought,

Though its black orb those long low
lashes' fringe

Had temper'd with a melancholy tinge;
Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there,

Or, if 'twere grief, a grief that none should
share:

And pleased not him the sports that please
his age,

The tricks of youth, the frolics of the

For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all-forgotten in that watchful trance;

And from his chief withdrawn, he wan-
der'd lone,

Brief were his answers, and his questions
none;

His walk the wood, his sport some foreign
book;

His resting-place the bank that curbs the
brook;

He seem'd, like him he served, to live
apart

From all that lures the eye, and fills the
heart;

To know no brotherhood, and take from
earth

No gift beyond that bitter boon—our birth.

XXVII

If aught he loved, 'twas Lara; but was
shown

His faith in reverence and in deeds alone;
In mute attention; and his care, which
guess'd

Each wish, fulfill'd it ere the tongue ex-
press'd.

Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brook'd not to be chid;

His zeal, though more than that of servile
hands,

In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 'twas Lara's less than his desire

That thus he served, but surely not for hire.
Slight were the tasks enjoin'd him by his
lord,

To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or, if he will'd it more,

On tomes of other times and tongues to
pore;

But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he show'd nor deference nor dis-
dain,

But that well-worn reserve which proved
he knew

No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,

Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seem'd, and better days,

Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak

Another sex, when match'd with that
smooth cheek,

But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than woman's eye

betrays;

A latent fierceness that far more became
His fiery climate than his tender frame:

True, in his words it broke not from his
breast,

But from his aspect might be more than
guess'd.

Kaled his name, though rumour said he
bore

Another ere he left his mountain-shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however
nigh,

That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar, or, if roused again,

Start to the sound, as but remember'd
then;

Unless 'twas Lara's wonted voice that
spake,

For then, ear, eyes, and heart would all
awake.

XXVIII

He had look'd down upon the festive
hall,
And mark'd that sudden strife so mark'd
of all:

And when the crowd around and near him
told

Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,
Such marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-
drops threw

The sickening iciness of that cold dew,
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which reflection
shrinks.

Yes—there be things which we must dream
and dare,

And execute ere thought be half aware:
Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast

That sidelong smile upon the knight he
pass'd;

When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell,
As if on something recognised right well:
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore:
Forward he sprung—a moment, both were

gone,
And all within that hall seem'd left alone;
Each had so fix'd his eye on Lara's mien,
All had so mix'd their feelings with that
scene,

That when his long dark shadow through
the porch

No more relieves the glare of yon high
torch,

Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms
seem

To bound as doubting from too black a
dream,

Such as we know is false, yet dread in
sooth,

Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone—but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remain'd not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho and retired.

XXIX

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest;
The courteous host, and all-approving
guest,

Again to that accustom'd couch must
creep

Where joy subsides, and sorrow sighs to
sleep,

And man, o'erlabour'd with his being's
strife,

Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life:

There lie love's feverish hope, and cun-
ning's guile,

Hate's working brain, and lull'd am-
bition's wile;

O'er each vain eye oblivion's pinions wave,
And quench'd existence crouches in a
grave.

What better name may slumber's bed be-
come?

Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where weakness, strength, vice, virtue,

sunk supine,
Alike in naked helplessness recline;

Glad for a while to heave unconscious
breath,

Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of
death,

And shun, though day but dawn on ills in-
creased,

That sleep, the loveliest, since it dreams
the least.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

NIGHT wanes—the vapours round the
mountains curl'd

Melt into morn, and Light awakes the
world,

Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near, to little but his last:

But mighty Nature bounds as from her
birth,

The sun is in the heavens, and life on
earth;

Flowers in the valley, splendour in the
beam,

Health on the gale, and freshness in the
stream.

Immortal man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, 'They are thine!'

Gaze on, while yet thy gladden'd eye may
see:

A morrow comes when they are not for
thee:

And grieve what may above thy senseless
bier,

Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf

shall fall,
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee,
for all;

But creeping things shall revel in their
spoil,

And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil.

II

'Tis morn—'tis noon—assembled in the
hall,

The gather'd chieftains come to Otho's
call;

'Tis now the promised hour, that must
proclaim

The life or death of Lara's future fame;

When Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatso'er the tale, it must be told.
His faith was pledged, and Lara's promise
given.²⁵
To meet it in the eye of man and heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be
divulged,
Methinks the accuser's rest is long in-
dulged.

III

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air;³⁰
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow's
o'ercast.
'I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
If yet he be on earth, expect him here;
The roof that held him in the valley stands
Between my own and noble Lara's lands;
My halls from such a guest had honour
gain'd,
Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdain'd,
But that some previous proof forbade his
stay,³⁹
And urged him to prepare against to-day;
The word I pledged for his I pledge again,
Or will myself redeem his knighthood's
stain.'⁴²

He ceased—and Lara answered, 'I am here
To lend at thy demand a listening ear
To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue,
Whose words already might my heart have
wrung,⁴⁶
But that I deem'd him scarcely less than mad,
Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
I know him not—but me it seems he knew
In lands where—but I must not trifle too:
Produce this babbler—or redeem the
pledge;⁵¹
Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's
edge.'

Proud Otho on the instant, reddening,
threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew.
'The last alternative befits me best,⁵⁵
And thus I answer for mine absent guest.'
With cheek unchanging from its sallow
gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness
spoke
Its grasp well used to deal the sabre-stroke;
With eye, though calm, determin'd not to
spare,⁶¹
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.
In vain the circling chieftains round them
closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed;
And from his lip those words of insult
fell—⁶⁵
His sword is good who can maintain them
well.

IV

Short was the conflict; furious, blindly
rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash:
He bled, and fell; but not with deadly
wound,
Stretch'd by a dexterous sleight along the
ground.⁷⁰
'Demand thy life!' He answer'd not: and
then
From that red floor he ne'er had risen
again,
For Lara's brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue;
And fiercer shook his angry falchion now
Than when his foe's was level'd at his
brow;⁷⁶
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleaven'd hatred of his
heart;
So little sparing to the foe he fell'd,
That when the approaching crowd his arm
withheld,⁸⁰
He almost turn'd the thirsty point on those
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose;
But to a moment's thought that purpose
bent;
Yet look'd he on him still with eye intent,
As if he loathed the ineffectual strife.⁸⁵
That left a foe, howe'er o'ercome, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent its victim onward to his grave.

V

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the
Leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and
speech;⁹⁰
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed, and heedless of them
all,
The cause and conqueror in his sudden
fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away;
He back'd his steed, his homeward path he
took,⁹⁵
Nor cast on Otho's towers a single look.

VI

But where was he? that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light.
Where was this Ezzelin? who came and
went,
To leave no other trace of his intent.¹⁰⁰
He left the dome of Otho long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast inquiry, which unfolded nought,
Except the absence of the chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarm'd, his murmuring squires
distress'd:

Their search extends along, around the
path,
In dread to meet the marks of prowlers'
wrath: 110

But none are there, and not a brake hath
borne

Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle
torn;

Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the
grass,

Which still retains a mark where murder
was; 114

Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale,
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,

When agonised hands that cease to guard,
Wound in the pang that smoothness of the
sword.

Some such had been, if here a life was
left,

But these were not; and doubting hope is
left; 120

And strange suspicion, whispering Lara's
name,

Now daily mutters o'er his blacken'd
fame;

Then sudden silent when his form ap-
pear'd,

Awaits the absence of the thing it fear'd,
Again its wonted wondering to renew, 125

And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are
heal'd,

But not his pride; and hate no more con-
ceal'd:

He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him
woe, 130

And from his country's justice now de-
mands

Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.

Who else than Lara could have cause to
fear

His presence? who had made him dis-
appear,

If not the man on whom his menaced
charge 135

Had sate too deeply were he left at large?

The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd;

The seeming friendlessness of him who
strove

To win no confidence, and wake no love;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul
betray'd, 141

The skill with which he wielded his keen
blade;

Where had his arm unwarlike caught that
art?

Where had that fierceness grown upon his
heart? 144

For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage;

But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity where its wrath had
fix'd;

Such as long power and overgorged
success

Concentrates into all that's merciless:
These, link'd with that desire which ever
sways 151

Mankind, the rather to condemn than
praise,

'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a
storm,

Such as himself might fear, and foes would
form, 154

And he must answer for the absent head
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;

That soil full many a wringing despot saw
Who work'd his wantonness in form of
law; 160

Long war without and frequent broil with-
in

Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin

New havoc, such as civil discord blends,
Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or
friends; 165

Fix'd in his feudal fortress each was lord,
In word and deed obey'd, in soul abhor'd.

Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish
hands;

But that long absence from his native
clime 170

Had left him stainless of oppression's
crime,

And now, diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away.

The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was
grown; 175

They deem'd him now unhappy, though at
first

Their evil judgment augur'd of the worst,
And each long restless night, and silent
mood,

Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude:
And though his lonely habits threw of
late 180

Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his
gate;

For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed
withdrew,

For them, at least, his soul compassion
knew.

Cold to the great, contemptuous to the
low

The humble pass'd not his unheeding eye;
Much he would speak not, but beneath his
roof 186

They found asylum oft, and ne'er reproof.

And they who watch'd might mark that,
 day by day,
 Some new retainers gather'd to his sway;
 But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
 He play'd the courteous lord and bounte-
 ous host: 191
 Perchance his strife with Otho made him
 dread
 Some snare prepared for his obnoxious
 head;
 Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
 With these, the people, than his fellow
 thanes. 195
 If this were policy, so far 'twas sound,
 The million judged but of him as they
 found;
 From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
 They but required a shelter, and 'twas given.
 By him no peasant mourn'd his rifled cot,
 And scarce the Serf could murmur o'er his
 lot; 201
 With him old avarice found its hoard secure,
 With him contempt forbore to mock the
 poor;
 Youth present cheer and promised recom-
 pense
 Detain'd, till all too late to part from thence:
 To hate he offer'd, with the coming
 change, 206
 The deep reversion of delay'd revenge;
 To love, long baffled by the unequal match,
 The well-won charms success was sure to
 snatch. 209
 All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
 That slavery nothing which was still a name.
 The moment came, the hour when Otho
 thought
 Secure at last the vengeance which he
 sought: 213
 His summons found the destined criminal
 Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall,
 Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
 Defying earth, and confident of heaven.
 That morning he had freed the soil-bound
 slaves,
 Who dig no land for tyrants but their
 graves!
 Such is their cry—some watchword for the
 fight 220
 Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the
 right;
 Religion — freedom — vengeance — what
 you will,
 A word 's enough to raise mankind to kill;
 Some factious phrase by cunning caught
 and spread,
 That guilt may reign, and wolves and
 worms be fed! 225

IX

Throughout that clime the feudal chiefs
 had gain'd
 Such sway, their infant monarch hardly
 reign'd;

Now was the hour for faction's rebel
 growth,
 The Serfs condemn'd the one, and hated
 both: 229
 They waited but a leader, and they found
 One to their cause inseparably bound;
 By circumstance compell'd to plunge
 In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
 Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
 Whom birth and nature meant not for his
 foes, 235
 Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
 Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst:
 Some reason urg'd, whate'er it was, to
 shun
 Inquiry into deeds at distance done; 239
 By mingling with his own the cause of all,
 E'en if he fail'd, he still delay'd his fall.
 The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
 The storm that once had spent itself and
 slept,
 Roused by events that seem'd foredoom'd
 to urge
 His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge,
 Burst forth, and made him all he once had
 been, 246
 And is again; he only changed the scene.
 Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
 But not less fitted for the desperate game:
 He deem'd himself mark'd out for others'
 hate, 250
 And mock'd at ruin so they shared his fate.
 What cared he for the freedom of the
 crowd?
 He raised the humble but to bend the
 proud.
 He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
 But man and destiny beset him there:
 Inured to hunters, he was found at bay;
 And they must kill, they cannot snare the
 prey. 257
 Stern, unambitious, silent, he had been
 Henceforth a calm spectator of life's scene;
 But dragg'd again upon the arena, stood
 A leader not unequal to the feud; 261
 In voice, mien, gesture, savage nature
 spoke,
 And from his eye the gladiator broke.

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,
 The feast of vultures, and the waste of life?
 The varying fortune of each separate field,
 The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that
 yield? 267
 The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
 In this the struggle was the same with all;
 Save that distemper'd passions lent their
 force 270
 In bitterness that banish'd all remorse.
 None sued, for Mercy knew her cry was
 vain,
 The captive died upon the battle-slain:

In either cause, one rage alone possess'd
The empire of the alternate victor's breast;
And they that smote for freedom or for
sway, 276
Deem'd few were slain, while more re-
main'd to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And Desolation reap'd the famish'd land;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was
spread, 280
And Carnage smiled upon her daily dead.

XI

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse
strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung:
But that vain victory hath ruin'd all;
They form no longer to their leader's call:
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty, and the thirst of hate,
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate:
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew;
In vain their stubborn ardour he would
tame, 292
The hand that kindles cannot quench the
flame;
The wary foe alone hath turn'd their
mood,
And shown their rashness to that erring
brood: 295
The feign'd retreat, the nightly ambus-
cade,
The daily harass, and the fight delay'd,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's
art, 300
And palls the patience of his baffled heart,
Of these they had not deem'd: the battle-
day
They could encounter as a veteran may;
But more prefer'd the fury of the strife,
And present death, to hourly suffering
life: 305
And famine wrings, and fever sweeps away
His numbers melting fast from their array;
Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent:
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:
Desperate, though few, the last and best
remain'd 312
To mourn the discipline they late dis-
dain'd.
One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native
war; 315
And bear within them to the neighbour-
ing state
An exile's sorrows, or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their father-land to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII

It is resolved—they march—consenting
Night 320
Guides with her star their dim and torch-
less flight;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry—Is yon the bank?
Away! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank.
Return or fly!—What glitters in the rear?
'Tis Otho's banner—the pursuer's spear!
Are those the shepherds' fires upon the
height?
Alas! they blaze too widely for the flight:
Cut off from hope, and compass'd in the
toil, 330
Less blood perchance hath bought a
richer spoil!

XIII

A moment's pause—'tis but to breathe
their band,
Or shall they onward press, or here with-
stand?
It matters little—if they charge the foes
Who by their border-stream their march
oppose, 335
Some few, perchance, may break and pass
the line,
However link'd to baffle such design.
'The charge be ours! to wait for their
assault
Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt.
Forth flies each sabre, rein'd is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip
the deed: 341
In the next tone of Lara's gathering
breath
How many shall but hear the voice of
death!

XIV

His blade is bared,—in him there is an air
As deep, but far too tranquil for despair;
A something of indifference more than
then 346
Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men.
He turn'd his eye on Kaled, ever near,
And still too faithful to betray one fear;
Perchance 'twas but the moon's dim twi-
light threw 350
Along his aspect an unwonted hue
Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint ex-
press'd
The truth, and not the terror of his breast.
This Lara mark'd, and laid his hand on
his: 354
It trembled not in such an hour as this;
His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,
His eye alone proclaim'd, 'We will not
part!
Thy band may perish, or thy friends may
flee,
Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee!'

The word hath pass'd his lips, and onward
 driven, 360
 Pours the link'd band through ranks
 asunder riven:
 Well has each steed obey'd the armed heel,
 And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel:
 Outnumber'd, not outraved, they still
 oppose
 Despair to daring, and a front to foes;
 And blood is mingled with the dashing
 stream, 366
 Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV

Commanding, aiding, animating all,
 Where foe appear'd to press, or friend to
 fall,
 Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes
 his steel, 370
 Inspiring hope himself had ceased to feel.
 None fled, for well they knew that flight
 were vain;
 But those that waver turn to smite again,
 While yet they find the firmest of the foe
 Recoil before their leader's look and blow:
 Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
 He foils their ranks, or re-unites his own;
 Himself he spared not—once they seem'd
 to fly— 378
 Now was the time, he waved his hand on

And shook—Why sudden droops that
 plumed crest? 380
 The shaft is sped—the arrow's in his
 breast!
 That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
 And Death has stricken down yon arm of
 pride.
 The word of triumph faintest from his
 tongue;
 That hand, so raised, how droopingly it
 hung! 385
 But yet the sword instinctively retains,
 Though from its fellow shrink the falling
 reins;
 These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
 And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow,
 Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
 Beguiles his charger from the combat's
 rage: 391
 Meantime his followers charge, and
 charge again;
 Too mix'd the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
 The cloven cuirass and the helmless head;
 The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
 And that last gasp hath burst his bloody
 girth; 397
 And near, yet quivering with what life re-
 main'd,
 The heel that urged him and the hand that
 rein'd;

And some too near that rolling torrent lie,
 Whose waters mock the lip of those that
 die; 401
 That panting thirst which scorches in the
 breath
 Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
 In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
 One drop—the last—to cool it for the
 grave; 405
 With feeble and convulsive effort swept,
 Their limbs along the crimson'd turf have
 crept;
 The faint remains of life such struggles
 waste,
 But yet they reach the stream and bend to
 taste:
 They feel its freshness, and almost par-
 take— 410
 Why pause? No further thirst have they
 to slake—
 It is unquench'd, and yet they feel it not;
 It was an agony—but now forgot!

XVII

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
 Where but for him that strife had never
 been, 415
 A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
 'Twas Lara bleeding fast from life away.
 His follower once, and now his only guide,
 Kneels Kaled watchful o'er his welling
 side,
 And with his scarf would stanch the tides
 that rush, 420
 With each convulsion, in a blacker gush;
 And then, as his faint breathing waxes
 low,
 In feeble, not less fatal tricklings flow:
 He scarce can speak, but motions him 'tis
 vain,
 And merely adds another throb to pain.
 He clasps the hand that pang which would
 assuage, 426
 And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark
 page,
 Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds,
 nor sees,
 Save that damp brow which rests upon
 his knees;
 Save that pale aspect, where the eye,
 though dim, 430
 Held all the light that shone on earth for
 him.

XVIII

The foe arrives, who long had search'd
 the field,
 Their triumph nought till Lara too should
 yield:
 They would remove him, but they see
 'twere vain,
 And he regards them with a calm disdain,
 That rose to reconcile him with his fate,
 And that escape to death from living hate;

And Otho comes, and leaping from his
steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him
bleed,
And questions of his state; he answers
not, 440
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled:—each remaining
word
They understood not, if distinctly heard;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance
wildly clung. 445
They spake of other scenes, but what—is
known
To Kaled, whom their meaning reach'd
alone;
And he replied, though faintly, to their
sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement
round:
They seem'd even then—that twain—unto
the last 450
To half-forget the present in the past;
To share between themselves some separ-
ate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should pene-
trate.

XIX

Their words though faint were many—
from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge
alone; 455
From this, you might have deem'd young
Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and
breath,
So sad, so deep, and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips
spoke;
But Lara's voice, though low, at first was
clear 460
And calm, till murmuring death gasp'd
hoarsely near;
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant, dark, and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his
last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast;
And once, as Kaled's answering accents
ceased, 466
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East:
Whether (as then the breaking sun from
high
Roll'd back the clouds) the morrow caught
his eye,
Or that 'twas chance, or some remem-
ber'd scene, 470
That raised his arm to point where such
had been,
Scarce Kaled seem'd to know, but turn'd
away,
As if his heart abhorr'd that coming day,

And shrunk his glance before that morn-
ing light,
To look on Lara's brow—where all grew
night. 475
Yet sense seem'd left, though better were
its loss;
For when one near display'd the absolv-
ing cross,
And proffer'd to his touch the holy bead,
Of which his parting soul might own the
need,
He look'd upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled—Heaven pardon! if 'twere
with disdain: 481
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor
withdrew
From Lara's face his fix'd despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture
swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred
gift, 485
As if such but disturb'd the expiring man,
Nor seem'd to know his life but *then*
began,
That life of Immortality, secure
To none, save them whose faith in Christ
is sure.

XX

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara
drew, 490
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretch'd fluttering, and his head
droop'd o'er
The weak yet still untiring knee that bore;
He press'd the hand he held upon his
heart—
It beats no more, but Kaled will not
part 495
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in
vain,
For that faint throb which answers not
again.
'It beats!'—Away, thou dreamer! he is
gone—
It once was Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI

He gazed, as if not yet had pass'd away
The haughty spirit of that humble clay;
And those around have roused him from
his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixed
glance;
And when, in raising him from where he
bore
Within his arms the form that felt no
more, 505
He saw the head his breast would still sus-
tain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the
plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,

LARA

[CANTO II

But strove to stand and gaze, but reel'd
and fell, ⁵¹⁰
Scarce breathing more than that he loved
so well.

Than that *he* loved! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of man such trusty love may
breathe!

That trying moment hath at once reveal'd
The secret long and yet but half conceal'd;
In baring to revive that lifeless breast, ⁵¹⁶
Its grief seem'd ended, but the sex confess'd;

And life return'd, and Kaled felt no
shame—

What now to her was Womanhood or
Fame?

XXII

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers
sleep, ⁵²⁰

But where he died his grave was dug as
deep;

Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor bless'd nor marble
deck'd the mound,

And he was mourn'd by one whose quiet
grief,

Less loud, outlasts a people's for their
chief. ⁵²⁵

Vain was all question ask'd her of the past,
And vain e'en menace—silent to the last;
She told nor whence, nor why she left
behind

Her all for one who seem'd but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool!—be
still— ⁵³⁰

Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes
discern,

And when they love, your smilers guess
not how

Beats the strong heart, though less the lips
avow. ⁵³⁵

They were not common links, that form'd
the chain

That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and
brain;

But that wild tale she brook'd not to un-
fold,

And seal'd is now each lip that could have
told.

XXIII

They laid him in the earth, and on his
breast, ⁵⁴⁰

Besides the wound that sent his soul to
rest,

They found the scatter'd dints of many a
scar,

Which were not planted there in recent war;
Where'er had pass'd his summer years of
life,

It seems they vanish'd in a land of strife;

But all unknown his glory or his guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was
spilt,

And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the
past,

Return'd no more—that night appear'd
his last. ⁵⁴⁹

XXIV

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A Serf that cross'd the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to
morn,

And nearly veil'd in mist her waning horn;
A Serf, that rose betimes to thread the
wood,

And hew the bough that brought his chil-
dren's food, ⁵⁵⁵

Pass'd by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain:
He heard a tramp—a horse and horse-
man broke

From out the wood—before him was a
cloak

Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle-
bow, ⁵⁶⁰

Bent was his head, and hidden was his
brow.

Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be
crime,

Himself unheeded watch'd the stranger's
course,

Who reach'd the river, bounded from his
horse, ⁵⁶⁵

And lifting thence the burthen which he
bore,

Heaved up the bank, and dash'd it from
the shore,

Then paused, and look'd, and turn'd, and
seem'd to watch,

And still another hurried glance would
snatch,

And follow with his step the stream that
flow'd, ⁵⁷⁰

As if even yet too much its surface show'd;
At once he started, stoop'd, around him
strown

The winter floods had scatter'd heaps of
stone;

Of these the heaviest thence he gather'd
there,

And slung them with a more than common
care. ⁵⁷⁵

Meantime the Serf had crept to where un-
seen

Himself might safely mark what this might
mean;

He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glitter'd starlike on the
vest;

But ere he well could mark the buoyant
trunk, ⁵⁸⁰

A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk:

It rose again, but indistinct to view,
 And left the waters of a purple hue,
 Then deeply disappear'd: the horseman
 gazed 584
 Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised;
 Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
 And instant spurr'd him into panting
 speed.
 His face was mask'd—the features of the
 dead,
 If dead it were, escaped the observer's
 dread;
 But if in sooth a star its bosom bore, 590
 Such is the badge that knighthood ever
 wore,
 And such 'tis known Sir Ezzelin had worn
 Upon the night that led to such a morn.
 If thus he perish'd, Heaven receive his
 soul! 594
 His undiscover'd limbs to ocean roll;
 And charity upon the hope would dwell
 It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV

And Kaled—Lara—Ezzelin, are gone,
 Alike without their monumental stone!
 The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
 From lingering where her chieftain's blood
 had been: 601
 Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
 Her tears were few, her wailing never loud;
 But furious would you tear her from the
 spot

Where yet she scarce believed that he was
 not, 605
 Her eye shot forth with all the living fire
 That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire;
 But left to waste her weary moments there,
 She talk'd all idly unto shapes of air,
 Such as the busy brain of Sorrow paints,
 And woos to listen to her fond complaints:
 And she would sit beneath the very tree
 Where lay his drooping head upon her
 knee:
 And in that posture where she saw him
 fall,
 His words, his looks, his dying grasp re-
 call; 615
 And she had shorn, but saved her raven
 hair,
 And oft would snatch it from her bosom
 there,
 And fold, and press it gently to the ground,
 As if she staunch'd anew some phantom's
 wound. 619
 Herself would question, and for him reply;
 Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
 From some imagined spectre in pursuit;
 Then seat her down upon some linden's
 root,
 And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
 Or trace strange characters along the sand.
 This could not last—she lies by him she
 loved; 626
 Her tale untold, her truth too dearly
 proved.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

TO

JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY HIS

January 22nd, 1816.

FRIEND.

ADVERTISEMENT

'THE grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country*, thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley: but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, proveditor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.'—*History of the Turks*, vol. iii, p. 131.

* Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810–11; and, in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains; or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different: that by sea has more sameness; but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Egina, Poros, &c., and the coast of the Continent.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

In the year since Jesus died for men,
 Eighteen hundred years and ten,
 We were a gallant company,
 Riding o'er land, and sailing o'er sea.
 Oh! but we went merrily! 5
 We forded the river, and clomb the high
 hill,

Never our steeds for a day stood still;
 Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,
 Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed: 9
 Whether we couch'd in our rough capote,
 On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,
 Or stretch'd on the beach, or our saddles
 spread

As a pillow beneath the resting head,
 Fresh we woke upon the morrow:
 All our thoughts and words had scope,
 We had health, and we had hope, 16
 Toil and travel, but no sorrow.

We were of all tongues and creeds;—
 Some were those who counted beads,
 Some of mosque, and some of church, 20
 And some, or I mis-say, of neither;
 Yet through the wide world might ye
 search,

Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.
 But some are dead, and some are gone,
 And some are scatter'd and alone, 25
 And some are rebels on the hills
 That look along Epirus' valleys,
 Where freedom still at moments rallies,
 And pays in blood oppression's ills;
 And some are in a far countree, 30
 And some all restlessly at home;
 But never more, oh! never, we
 Shall meet to revel and to roam.

But those hardy days flew cheerily!
 And when they now fall drearily, 35
 My thoughts, like swallows, skim the
 main,
 And bear my spirit back again
 Over the earth, and through the air,
 A wild bird and a wanderer.
 'Tis this that ever wakes my strain, 40
 And oft, too oft, implores again
 The few who may endure my lay,
 To follow me so far away.
 Stranger—wilt thou follow now,
 And sit with me on Acro-Corinth's brow?

Many a vanish'd year and age, 46
 And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
 Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands,
 A fortress form'd to Freedom's hands.
 The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's
 shock, 50
 Have left untouch'd her hoary rock,
 The keystone of a land, which still,
 Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,

The landmark to the double tide
 That purpling rolls on either side, 55
 As if their waters chafed to meet,
 Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
 But could the blood before her shed
 Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
 Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 60
 Arise from out the earth which drank
 The stream of slaughter as it sank,
 That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
 Her isthmus idly spread below:
 Or could the bones of all the slain, 65
 Who perish'd there, be piled again,
 That rival pyramid would rise
 More mountain-like, through those clear
 skies,
 Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis,
 Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 70

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
 The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
 And downward to the Isthmian plain,
 From shore to shore of either main,
 The tent is pitch'd, the crescent shines 75
 Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
 And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
 Beneath each bearded pacha's glance;
 And far and wide as eye can reach
 The turban'd cohorts throng the beach;
 And there the Arab's camel kneels, 81
 And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
 The Turcoman hath left his herd,
 The sabre round his loins to gird;
 And there the volleying thunders pour, 85
 Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
 The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
 Wings the far hissing globe of death;
 Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
 Which crumbles with the ponderous ball;
 And from that wall the foe replies, 91
 O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
 With fires that answer fast and well
 The summons of the Infidel.

But near and nearest to the wall 95
 Of those who wish and work its fall,
 With deeper skill in war's black art
 Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
 As any chief that ever stood
 Triumphant in the fields of blood; 100
 From post to post, and deed to deed,
 Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
 Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
 And make the foremost Moslem quail;
 Or where the battery, guarded well, 105
 Remains as yet impregnable,
 Alighting cheerily to inspire
 The soldier slackening in his fire;

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast,
To guide the follower o'er the field, 111
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade;—
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV

From Venice—once a race of worth 115
His gentle sires—he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow. 120
Through many a change had Corinth
pass'd

With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal 125
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast—'the Free'; 130
And in the palace of St. Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the 'Lion's mouth' had placed
A charge against him uneffaced:
He fled in time, and saved his life, 135
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumph'd o'er the Cross,
'Gainst which he rear'd the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die. 140

V

Coumourgi—he whose closing scene
Adorn'd the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
The last and mightiest of the slain,
He sank, regretting not to die, 145
But cursed the Christian's victory—
Coumourgi—can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore? 150
A hundred years have roll'd away
Since he refix'd the Moslem's sway;
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van
To Alp, who well repaid the trust 155
By cities levell'd with the dust;
And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them pour'd the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent 161
From battery to battlement;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin;

And here and these some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb; 166
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flash'd
The flame, as loud the ruin crash'd, 170
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dum,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue. 176

VII

But not for vengeance, long delay'd,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach:
Within these walls a maid was pent 181
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time, 187
While unimpeach'd for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glitter'd through the Carnival;
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters play'd
At midnight to Italian maid. 193

VIII

And many deem'd her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca's hand remain'd
Still by the church's bonds unchain'd:
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore, 199
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,
And pensive wax'd the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
Which conquer'd hearts they ceased to
prize; 205
With listless look she seems to gaze:
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance. 211

IX

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side, 215
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace 220
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece:

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame 225
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorn'd the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn; 230
And with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are rank'd; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman, 235
The full of hope, misnamed 'forlorn',
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone—the last who dies!

XI

'Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply
down; 243
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright,
Who ever gazed upon them shining
And turn'd to earth without repining,
Nor wish'd for wings to flee away, 250
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmur'd meekly as the brook. 255
The winds were pillow'd on the waves;
The banners droop'd along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke, 260
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neigh'd off and shrill,
And echo answer'd from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air 266
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet, 270
Such as when winds and harp-strings
meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seem'd to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall:
It struck even the besieger's ear 276
With something ominous and drear,
An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,

Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
Of that strange sense its silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell 282
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hush'd, the prayer was
o'er, 285
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obey'd:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay, 290
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul 294
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be 300
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil. 305
He stood alone—a renegade
Against the country he betray'd;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand: 309
They follow'd him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouch'd to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin. 315
They envied even the faithless fame
He earn'd beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene. 319
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel. 325
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first:
So lions o'er the jackal sway;
The jackal points, he feels the prey,
Then on the vulgar, yelling, press, 330
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII

His head grows fever'd, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse:
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose; 335
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

The turban on his hot brow press'd,
The mail weigh'd lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight
Upon his eyes had slumber sate, 341
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.
He could not rest, he could not stay 346
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walk'd him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strew'd the
strand.
What pillow'd them? and why should he
More wakeful than the humblest be,
Since more their peril, worse their toil?
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands pass'd
A night of sleep, perchance their last, 355
In sickly vigil wander'd on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm, 360
And bathed his brow with airy balm:
Behind, the camp—before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow, 365
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly
gone,
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time:
Tyrant and slave are swept away, 370
Less form'd to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement; 375
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And linger'd on the spot, where long 380
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh! still her step at moments falters
O'er wither'd fields, and ruin'd altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token: 385
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remember'd rays,
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV

Not mindless of these mighty times 390
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wander'd,
And o'er the past and present ponder'd,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled, 395

He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheer'd the band, and waved the
sword,
A traitor in a turban'd horde;
And led them to the lawless siege, 400
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy number'd,
The chiefs whose dust around him slum-
ber'd;
Their phalanx marshall'd on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.
They fell devoted, but undying; 406
The very gale their name seem'd sighing;
The waters murmur'd of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and grey, 410
Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapp'd the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river
Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears, 416
That land is glory's still and theirs!
'Tis still a watchword to the earth:
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,
So sanction'd, on the tyrant's head: 421
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And woo'd the freshness Night diffus'd.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,
Which changeless rolls eternally; 427
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest
mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land
for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them
flow, 430
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not
there, 435
And the fringe of the foam may be seen
below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wander'd on along the beach, 440
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him
not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile
shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their
hearts wax'd cold? 445

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

I know not, in sooth; but from yonder
wall

There flash'd no fire, and there hiss'd no
ball,

Though he stood beneath the bastion's
frown,

That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the
town;

Though he heard the sound, and could
almost tell 450

The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below

Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall

Hold o'er the dead their carnival, 455
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and

limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!

From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd
the flesh,

As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the

whiter skull, 460
As it slipp'd through their jaws, when

their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the

dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot

where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast

With those who had fallen for that night's
repat. 465

And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd
on the sand,

The foremost of these were the best of his
band:

Crimson and green were the shawls of
their wear,

And each scalp had a single long tuft of
hair,

All the rest was shaven and bare. 470
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,

The hair was tangled round his jaw:
But close by the shore, on the edge of the

gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,

Who had stolen from the hills, but kept
away, 475

Scared by the dogs, from the human
prey;

But he seized on his share of a steed that
lay,

Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII

Alp turn'd him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight;

But he better could brook to behold the
dying, 481

Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorch'd with the death-thirst, and writh-

ing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all

pain.

There is something of pride in the perilous
hour, 485

Whate'er be the shape in which death may
lower;

For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!

But when all is past, it is humbling to
tread

O'er the weltering field of the tombless
dead, 490

And see worms of the earth, and fowls of
the air,

Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,

All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII

There is a temple in ruin stands, 495
Fashion'd by long-forgotten hands;

Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!

Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things

before! 500
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave

But enough of the past for the future to
grieve

O'er that which hath been, and o'er that
which must be:

What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have pass'd away,

Fragments of stone rear'd by creatures of
clay! 506

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And pass'd his hand athwart his face;

Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude; 510

His head was drooping on his breast,
Fever'd, throbbing, and oppress'd;

And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers weat,

Hurriedly, as you may see 515
Your own run over the ivory key,

Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.

There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh. 520

Was it the wind through some hollow
stone

Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he look'd on the

sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;

He look'd on the long grass—it waved
not a blade; 525

How was that gentle sound convey'd?
He look'd to the banners—each flag lay

still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,

And he felt not a breath come over his
cheek;

What did that sudden sound bespeak?

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

He turn'd to the left—is he sure of sight?

There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
'God of my fathers! what is here?' 535
Who art thou? and wherefore sent
So near a hostile armament?
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deem'd no more divine:
He had resumed it in that hour, 540
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his
bride! 545

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellow'd with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enliven'd their
red.

The ocean's calm within their view,
Beside her eye had less of blue; 551
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought conceal'd her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair, 556
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm show'd white and bare:
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high; 560
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine
through.

XXI

'I come from my rest to him I love best,
That I may be happy, and he may be
bless'd,
I have pass'd the guards, the gate, the
wall; 565
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity;
And the Power on high, that can shield
the good
Thus from the tyrant of the wood, 570
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as
well
From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
I come—and if I come in vain,
Never, oh never, we meet again!
Thou hast done a fearful deed 575
In falling away from thy fathers' creed:
But dash that turban to earth, and sign
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
Wring the black drop from thy heart,
And to-morrow unites us no more to
part.' 580

'And where should our bridal couch be
spread?

In the midst of the dying and the dead?
For to-morrow we give to the slaughter
and flame

The sons and the shrines of the Christian
name. 584

None, save thou and thine, I've sworn,
Shall be left upon the morn:
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
Where our hands shall be join'd, and our
sorrow forgot.

There thou yet shalt be my bride, 589
When once again I've quell'd the pride
Of Venice; and her hated race
Have felt the arm they would debase
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
Whom vice and envy made my foes.'

Upon his hand she laid her own— 595
Light was the touch, but it thrill'd to the
bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fix'd him beyond the power to
start.

Though slight was that grasp so mortal
cold,
He could not loose him from its hold;
But never did clasp of one so dear 601
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of
fear,

As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch
that night.

The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like
stone, 606

As he look'd on the face, and beheld its
hue,

So deeply changed from what he knew:
Fair but faint—without the ray

Of mind, that made each feature play
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as
death,

And her words came forth without her
breath,

And there rose not a heave o'er her
bosom's swell,
And there seem'd not a pulse in her veins
to dwell. 615

Though her eye shone out, yet the lids
were fix'd,

And the glance that it gave was wild and
unmix'd

With aught of change, as the eyes may
seem

Of the restless who walk in a troubled
dream;

Like the figures on arras, that gloomily
glare, 620

Stirr'd by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

As they seem, through the dimness, about
to come down

From the shadowy wall where their images
frown; 625

Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

'If not for love of me be given
Thus much, then, for the love of
heaven,—

Again I say—that turban tear 630
From off thy faithless brow, and swear
Thine injured country's sons to spare,
Or thou art lost; and never shalt see—
Not earth—that's past—but heaven or
me.

If this thou dost accord, albeit 635
A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet,
That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
And mercy's gate may receive thee within:
But pause one moment more, and take
The curse of Him thou didst forsake;
And look once more to heaven, and see
Its love for ever shut from thee.
There is a light cloud by the moon—
'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—
If, by the time its vapoury sail 645
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
Thy heart within thee is not changed;
Then God and man are both avenged;
Dark will thy doom be, darker still
Thine immortality of ill.' 650

Alp look'd to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turn'd aside,
By deep interminable pride. 654
This first false passion of his breast
Roll'd like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! He dismay'd
By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wrong'd by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave! 660
No—though that cloud were thunder's
worst,
And charged to crush him—let it burst!

He look'd upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply; 664
He watch'd it passing; it is frown:
Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake—'Whate'er my fate,
I am no changeling—'tis too late:
The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
Then rise again; the tree must shiver.
What Venice made me, I must be, 671
Her foe in all, save love to thee:
But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!
He turn'd, but she is gone!
Nothing is there but the column stone.
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted
in air? 676
He saw not—he knew not—but nothing
is there.

XXII

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away 680
The Morning from her mantle grey,
And the noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous
horn,
And the flap of the banners, that flit as
they're borne, 685
And the neigh of the steed, and the multi-
tude's hum,
And the clash, and the shout, 'They come!
they come!'
The horsetails are pluck'd from the
ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but
wait for the word.
Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman, 690
Strike your tents, and throng to the van:
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
When he breaks from the town; and none
escape, 694
Aged or young, in the Christian shape;
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they
pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to
the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each
mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the
bit; 700
The spears are uplifted; the matches are
lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to
roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled
before:
Forms in his phalanx each janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar; 706
The khan and the pachas are all at their
post;
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then
on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one— 710
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her
walls.
God and the prophet—Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
'There the breach lies for passage, the
ladder to scale; 715
And your hands on your sabres, and how
should ye fail?
He who first downs with the red cross may
crave
His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it,
and have!'

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

Thus utter'd Coumourgi, the dauntless
vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and
spear, 720
And the shout of fierce thousands in joy-
ous ire:—
Silence—hark to the signal—fire!

XXIII

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that
gore, 726
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength
but to die:
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent; 730
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strew'd the earth like broken glass,
Shiver'd by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no
more:
Even as they fell, in files they lay, 735
Like the mower's grass at the close of
day,
When his work is done on the levell'd
plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV

As the spring-tides, with heavy plash,
From the cliffs invading dash, 740
Huge fragments, sapp'd by the cease-
less flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below; 744
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renew'd
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses
they fell,
Heap'd by the host of the infidel, 750
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute:
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter or for victory, 754
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice, 760
Which pierces the deep hills through
and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,) 765
Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV

From the point of encountering blades
to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;
But the rampart is won, and the spoil
begun,
And all but the after carnage done. 770
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plunder'd dome;
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery
street;
But here and there, where 'vantage
ground 775
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again—
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 780

There stood an old man—his hairs were
white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the
fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay; 785
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurk'd beneath his corslet bright; 789
But of every wound his body bore,
Each and all had been ta'en before:
Though aged, he was so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with
him,
And the foes, whom he singly kept at
bay,
Outnumber'd his thin hairs of silver
grey. 795
From right to left his sabre swept;
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipp'd
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score. 800
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait
His only boy had met his fate, 806
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 810
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands be-
fore
For thousands of years were inhumed
on the shore;
What of them is left, to tell 815
Where they lie, and how they fell?

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in
their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally
saves.

XXVI

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is
at hand; 820
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare—
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves
them on;

Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show, 825
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear,—
Alp is but known by the white arm
bare; 830
Look through the thick of the fight,
'tis there!

There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far; 835
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar; 840
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levell'd foe,
Though faint beneath the mutual
wound, 845

Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII

Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp's career a moment check'd.
'Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
For thine own, thy daughter's sake.'

'Never, renegado, never! 851
Though the life of thy gift would last
for ever.'

'Francesca!—Oh, my promised bride!
Must she too perish by thy pride?'

'She is safe.'—'Where? where?'—'In
heaven; 855
From whence thy traitor soul is driven—
Far from thee, and undefiled.'
Grimly then Minotti smiled,
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow. 860
'Oh God! when died she?'—'Yester-
night—
Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:

None of my pure race shall be
Slaves to Mahomet and thee—
Come on!—That challenge is in vain—
Alp's already with the slain! 866
While Minotti's words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion's point had found,
Had the time allow'd to wound, 870
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dash'd Alp to the
ground; 875

Ere an eye could view the wound
That crash'd through the brain of the
infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise, 880
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turn'd him on his back; his breast
And brow were stain'd with gore and
dust, 886

And through his lips the life-blood
oozed,

From its deep veins lately loosed:
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob; 890
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death;
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unanel'd he pass'd away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid,—
To the last a Renegade. 896

XXVIII

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing, 900
Clashing swords, and spears trans-
fixing,

Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute 905
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;
With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable, 910

Whence issued late the fated ball
That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track; 915
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane;

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

There they yet may breathe awhile, 920
Shelter'd by the massy pile.

XXIX

Brief breathing-time! the turban'd host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and
heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat;
For narrow the way that led to the
spot 926
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly
try
Through the massy column to turn and
fly;
They perforce must do or die. 930
They die; but ere their eyes could close,
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinn'd, though slaugh-
ter'd still; 934
And faint the weary Christians wax
Before the still renew'd attacks:
And now the Othmans gain the gate;
Still resists its iron weight,
And still, all deadly aim'd and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot;
From every shatter'd window pour 941
The volleys of the sulphurous shower:
But the portal wavering grows and
weak—
The iron yields, the hinges creak—
It bends—it falls—and all is o'er; 945
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar-stone:
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above, 950
With eyes of light and looks of love;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there, we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,
Smiling sweetly on each prayer 956
To heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her
aisles:
Minotti lifted his aged eye, 960
And made the sign of a cross with a
sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed there-
by;
And still he stood, while with steel and
flame
Inward and onward the Mussulman
came.

XXXI

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contain'd the dead of ages gone; 966

Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's vein diffuse, 970
Were smear'd, and slippery,—stain'd,
and strown
With broken swords, and helms o'er-
thrown:
There were dead above, and the dead
below
Lay cold in many a coffin'd row;
You might see them piled in sable
state, 975
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had enter'd their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly
spread
In masses by the fleshless dead: 980
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late-form'd train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force.

XXXII

The foe came on, and few remain 986
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the
dead, 990
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands
wrest
The silver vessels saints had bless'd.
To the high altar on they go; 996
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 1000
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so
divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the
break of day,
To shrive their souls ere they join'd in
the fray. 1005
Still a few drops within it lay:
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil—the richest, and the last.

XXXIII

So near they came, the nearest stretch'd
To grasp the spoil he almost reach'd,
When old Minotti's hand
Touch'd with the torch the train—
—'Tis fired! 1015

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the
slain,
The turban'd victors, the Christian
band,

All that of living or dead remain,
Hurl'd on high with the shiver'd fane,
In one wild roar expired! 1020

The shatter'd town—the walls thrown
down—

The waves a moment backward bent—
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake pass'd—

The thousand shapeless things all
driven 1025

In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast—

Proclaim'd the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore:

Up to the sky like rockets go 1030
All that mingled there below:

Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorch'd and shrivell'd to a span,

When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strew'd the plain: 1035

Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the
sprinkles

With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,

Scatter'd o'er the isthmus lay; 1040
Christian or Moslem, which be they?

Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,

And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child, 1045

Little deem'd she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.

Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;

That one moment left no trace 1050
More of human form or face

Save a scatter'd scalp or bone:
And down came blazing rafters, strown

Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dinted in the clay, 1055

All blacken'd there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard

That deadly earth-shock disappear'd:
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,

And howling left the unburied dead;
The camels from their keepers broke;

The distant steer forsook the yoke—
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,

And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the
marsh, 1065

Deep-mouth'd arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yell'd on the cavern'd hill

Where echo roll'd in thunder still;
The jackals' troop, in gather'd cry,

Bay'd from afar complainingly, 1070
With a mix'd and mournful sound,

Like crying babe, and beaten hound:
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,

The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun, 1075

The clouds beneath him seem'd so dun;
Their smoke assail'd his startled beak,

And made him higher soar and shriek—
Thus was Corinth lost and won!

PARISINA

SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, ESQ.

THE FOLLOWING POEM IS INSCRIBED,

BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIR'D HIS TALENTS, AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP

January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's 'Antiquities of the House of Brunswick.' I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the Continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

'Under the reign of Nicholas III. Ferrara was polluted with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an attendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Parisina, and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by the sentence of a father and husband, who published his shame, and survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if they were guilty: if they were innocent, he was still more unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the last act of the justice of a parent.'—*Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iii, p. 470.

PARISINA

I

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word;
And gentle winds, and waters near, 5
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue, 10
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon
away.

II

But it is not to list to the waterfall 15
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown
flower; 20
She listens—but not for the nightingale—
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage
thick,
And her cheek grows pale, and her heart
beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the rust-
ling leaves, 25
And her blush returns, and her bosom
heaves:
A moment more and they shall meet—
'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

III

And what unto them is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide? 30
Its living things, its earth and sky,
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had pass'd away, 35
They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway:
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem 41
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused, or fear'd in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments
last? 45
But yet—they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past: 50
And though they hope and vow, they
grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh—the long embrace—
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face 55
The Heaven she fears will not forgive
her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar—
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting place.
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart, 62
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed, 65
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fever'd in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled
dreams, 70
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes, 75
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
The dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep.

VI

He clasp'd her sleeping to his heart,
And listen'd to each broken word:
He hears—Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may—a deeper doom 85
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before.
And well he may—his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doom'd to cease. 90
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his
pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,
Which rolls the plank upon the shore,
And dashes on the pointed rock 96
The wretch who sinks to rise no more,—
So came upon his soul the shock.

PARISINA

And whose that name? 'tis Hugo's,—
his— 99
In sooth he had not deem'd of this!—
'Tis Hugo's,—he, the child of one
He loved—his own all-evil son—
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betray'd Bianca's truth, 104
The maid whose folly could confide
In him who made her not his bride.

VII

He pluck'd his poniard in its sheath,
But sheath'd it ere the point was
bare—
How'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair—
At least, not smiling—sleeping—
there: 111
Nay more:—he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her
trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again; 115
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleam'd on the dew-drops big and
damp.
She spake no more—but she still slum-
ber'd—
While, in his thought, her days are
number'd.

VIII

And with the morn he sought and
found, 120
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he fear'd to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe;
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would trans-
fer 125
The guilt—the shame—the doom—
to her:
Concealment is no more—they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell:
And Azo's tortured heart and ear 130
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX

He was not one who brook'd delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway 134
Upon his throne of judgment sat;
His nobles and his guards are there,—
Before him is the sinful pair;
Both young,—and one how passing fair!
With swordless belt, and fetter'd hand,
Oh, Christ! that thus a son should
stand 140
Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!

And yet he seems not overcome, 145
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X

And still, and pale, and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;
How changed since last her speaking
eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering
room, 150
Where high-born men were proud to
wait,
Where Beauty watch'd to imitate
Her gentle voice, her lovely mien,
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen! 155
Then,—had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless
shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.
Now,—what is she? and what are they?
Can she command, or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn for-
bear, 165
Her knights and dames, her court—is
there:
And he, the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couch'd before her glance,
Who—were his arm a moment free—
Had died or gain'd her liberty; 170
The minion of his father's bride,—
He, too, is fetter'd by her side;
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him:
Those lids—o'er which the violet vein
Wandering, leaves a tender stain, 176
Shining through the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite—
Now seem'd with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade, the orbs below;
Which glance so heavily, and fill, 181
As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI

And he for her had also wept,
But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept; 185
Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avow'd,
He would not shrink before the crowd;
But yet he dared not look on her;
Remembrance of the hours that were—
His guilt, his love, his present state—
His father's wrath, all good men's
hate— 192
His earthly, his eternal fate—
And hers,—oh, hers! he dared not throw
One look upon that death-like brow!
Else had his rising heart betray'd 196
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII

And Azo spake:—'But yesterday
 I gloried in a wife and son;
 That dream this morning pass'd away;
 Ere day declines, I shall have none.
 My life must linger on alone; 202
 Well,—let that pass,—there breathes
 not one
 Who would not do as I have done:
 Those ties are broken—not by me;
 Let that too pass;—the doom's pre-
 pared! 206
 Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
 And then—thy crime's reward!
 Away! address thy prayers to Heaven,
 Before its evening stars are met—
 Learn if thou there canst be forgiven;
 Its mercy may absolve thee yet. 212
 But here, upon the earth beneath,
 There is no spot where thou and I
 Together for an hour could breathe:
 Farewell! I will not see thee die—
 But thou, frail thing! shalt view his
 head— 217
 Away! I cannot speak the rest:
 Go! woman of the wanton breast;
 Not I, but thou his blood dost shed:
 Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,
 And joy thee in the life I give.' 222

XIII

And here stern Azo hid his face—
 For on his brow the swelling vein
 Throbb'd as if back upon his brain
 The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd
 again, 226
 And therefore bow'd he for a space,
 And pass'd his shaking hand along
 His eye, to veil it from the throng:
 While Hugo raised his chain'd hands,
 And for a brief delay demands 231
 His father's ear: the silent sire
 Forbids not what his words require.

'It is not that I dread the death—
 For thou hast seen me by thy side
 All redly through the battle ride,
 And that—not once a useless brand—
 Thy slaves have wrested from my hand
 Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,
 Than e'er can stain the axe of mine:
 Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my
 breath, 241
 A gift for which I thank thee not;
 Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,
 Her slighted love and ruin'd name,
 Her offspring's heritage of shame;
 But she is in the grave, where he,
 Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.
 Her broken heart—my sever'd head—
 Shall witness for thee from the dead
 How trusty and how tender were 250
 Thy youthful love—paternal care.

'Tis true that I have done thee wrong—
 But wrong for wrong;—this,—
 deem'd thy bride,
 The other victim of thy pride,—
 Thou know'st for me was destined long;
 Thou saw'st, and coveted'st her charms;
 And with thy very crime—my birth—
 Thou tauntedst me, as little worth;
 A match ignoble for her arms, 259
 Because, forsooth, I could not claim
 The lawful heirship of thy name,
 Nor sit on Este's lineal throne;
 Yet, were a few short summers mine,
 My name should more than Este's shine
 With honours all my own. 265
 I had a sword—and have a breast
 That should have won as haught a crest
 As ever waved along the line
 Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
 Not always knightly spurs are worn
 The brightest by the better born; 271
 And mine have lanced my courser's
 flank
 Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
 When charging to the cheering cry
 Of "Este" and of "Victory!" 275
 I will not plead the cause of crime,
 Nor sue thee to redeem from time
 A few brief hours or days that must
 At length roll o'er my reckless dust;—
 Such maddening moments as my past,
 They could not, and they did not, last.
 Albeit my birth and name be base,
 And thy nobility of race 283
 Disdain'd to deck a thing like me—
 Yet in my lineaments they trace
 Some features of my father's face,
 And in my spirit—all of thee.
 From thee this tamelessness of heart—
 From thee—nay, wherefore dost thou
 start?— 289
 From thee in all their vigour came
 My arm of strength, my soul of flame;
 Thou didst not give me life alone,
 But all that made me more thine own.
 See what thy guilty love hath done!
 Repaid thee with too like a son! 295
 I am no bastard in my soul,
 For that, like thine, abhor'd control;
 And for my breath, that hasty boon
 Thou gav'st and wilt resume so soon,
 I valued it no more than thou, 300
 When rose thy casque above thy brow,
 And we, all side by side, have striven,
 And o'er the dead our coursers driven:
 The past is nothing—and at last
 The future can but be the past; 305
 Yet would I that I then had died:
 For though thou work'dst my
 mother's ill,
 And made thy own my destined bride,
 I feel thou art my father still: 309
 And harsh as sounds thy hard decree,
 'Tis not unjust, although from thee.

PARISINA

Begot in sin, to die in shame,
 My life begun and ends the same:
 As err'd the sire, so err'd the son, 314
 And thou must punish both in one.
 My crime seems worst to human view,
 But God must judge between us too!

XIV

He ceased—and stood with folded
 arms,

On which the circling fetters sounded;
 And not an ear but felt as wounded,
 Of all the chiefs that there were
 rank'd, 321

When those dull chains in meeting
 clank'd:

Till Parisina's fatal charms
 Again attracted every eye—
 Would she thus hear him doom'd to die!
 She stood, I said, all pale and still,
 The living cause of Hugo's ill: 327
 Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
 Not once had turn'd to either side—
 Nor once did those sweet eyelids close,
 Or shade the glance o'er which they
 rose, 331

But round their orbs of deepest blue
 The circling white dilated grew—
 And there with glassy gaze she stood
 As ice were in her curdled blood;
 But every now and then a tear 336
 So large and slowly gather'd slid
 From the long dark fringe of that fair
 lid,

It was a thing to see, not hear!
 And those who saw, it did surprise,
 Such drops could fall from human eyes.
 To speak she thought—the imperfect
 note 342

Was choked within her swelling throat,
 Yet seem'd in that low hollow groan
 Her whole heart gushing in the tone.
 It ceased—again she thought to speak,
 Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
 And to the earth she fell like stone
 Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
 More like a thing that ne'er had life,—
 A monument of Azo's wife, 351
 Than her, that living guilty thing,
 Whose every passion was a sting,
 Which urged to guilt, but could not
 bear

That guilt's detection and despair. 355
 But yet she lived—and all too soon
 Recover'd from that death-like swoon—
 But scarce to reason—every sense
 Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;
 And each frail fibre of her brain 360
 (As bowstrings, when relax'd by rain,
 The erring arrow launch aside)
 Sent forth her thoughts all wild and
 wide—

The past a blank, the future black,
 With glimpses of a dreary track, 365

Like lightning on the desert path,
 When midnight storms are mustering
 wrath. 367

She fear'd—she felt that something ill
 Lay on her soul, so deep and chill;
 That there was sin and shame she knew,
 That some one was to die—but who?
 She had forgotten:—did she breathe?
 Could this be still the earth beneath,
 The sky above, and men around; 374
 Or were they fiends who now so frown'd
 On one, before whose eyes each eye
 Till then had smiled in sympathy?
 All was confused and undefined
 To her all-jarr'd and wandering mind;
 A chaos of wild hopes and fears: 380
 And now in laughter, now in tears,
 But madly still in each extreme,
 She strove with that convulsive dream;
 For so it seem'd on her to break:
 Oh! vainly must she strive to wake!

The Convent bells are ringing, 386
 But mournfully and slow;
 In the grey square turret swinging,
 With a deep sound, to and fro.
 Heavily to the heart they go! 390
 Hark! the hymn is singing—
 The song for the dead below,
 Or the living who shortly shall be so!
 For a departing being's soul
 The death-hymn peals and the hollow
 bells knoll: 395

He is near his mortal goal;
 Kneeling at the Friar's knee,
 Sad to hear, and piteous to see—
 Kneeling on the bare cold ground,
 With the block before and the guards
 around— 400
 And the headsman with his bare arm
 ready,
 That the blow may be both swift and
 steady,
 Feels if the axe be sharp and true
 Since he set its edge anew:
 While the crowd in a speechless circle
 gather 405
 To see the Son fall by the doom of the
 Father!

It is a lovely hour as yet
 Before the summer sun shall set,
 Which rose upon that heavy day, 409
 And mock'd it with his steadiest ray;
 And his evening beams are shed
 Full on Hugo's fated head,
 As his last confession pouring
 To the monk, his doom deploring
 In penitential holiness, 415
 He bends to hear his accents bless
 With absolution such as may
 Wipe our mortal stains away.

That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen, 420
And the rings of chestnut hair
Curl'd half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter—
Oh! that parting hour was bitter! 426
Even the stern stood chill'd with awe:
Dark the crime, and just the law—
Yet they shudder'd as they saw.

XVII

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son, and daring lover! 431
His heads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted;
His mantling cloak before was stripp'd,
His bright brown locks must now be
clipp'd; 435
'Tis done—all closely are they shorn;
The vest which till this moment worn—
The scarf which Parisina gave—
Must not adorn him to the grave. 439
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied;
But no—that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renew'd,
When headsman's hands prepared to bind
Those eyes which would not brook
such blind,
As if they dared not look on death.
'No—yours my forfeit blood and
breath;
These hands are chain'd, but let me die
At least with an unshackled eye— 451
Strike:—and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bow'd his head;
These the last accents Hugo spoke:
'Strike'—and flashing fell the stroke—
Roll'd the head—and, gushing, sunk
Back the stain'd and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein
Slaked with its ensanguined rain; 459
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,
Convulsed and quick—then fix for ever.

He died, as erring man should die,
Without display, without parade;
Meekly had he bow'd and pray'd,
As not disdaining priestly aid; 465
Nor desperate of all hope on high.
And while before the Prior kneeling,
His heart was wean'd from earthly feeling;
His wrathful sire, his paramour—
What were they in such an hour? 470
No more reproach, no more despair,
No thought but heaven, no word but
prayer—
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headsman's
stroke,

He claim'd to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around. 476

XVIII

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran, 480
As down the deadly blow descended
On him whose life and love thus ended;
And, with a hushing sound compress'd,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
Beyond the blow that to the block
Pierced through with forced and
sullen shock, 487
Save one:—what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill, so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child,
Done to death by sudden blow, 491
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turn'd thereon: 496
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek—and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it pass'd,
In mercy wish'd it were the last. 501

XIX

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen: 504
Her name—as if she ne'er had been—
Was banish'd from each lip and ear,
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb, no memory had they; 510
Theirs was unconsecrated clay—
At least the knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode, 515
And won to heaven her dreary road
By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel;
Or if, upon the moment smote, 521
She died by tortures less remote,
Like him she saw upon the block,
With heart that shared the headsman's
shock,
In quicken'd brokenness that came,
In pity, o'er her shatter'd frame, 526
None knew—and none can ever know:
But whatsoe'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX

And Azo found another bride, 530
And goodly sons grew by his side;

PARISINA

But none so lovely and so brave
As him who wither'd in the grave;
Or if they were—on his cold eye
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smother'd sigh. 536
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were
wrought

The intersected lines of thought; 540
Those furrows which the burning share
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remain'd below 546
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunn'd itself—and yet
That would not yield, nor could forget,
Which, when it least appear'd to melt,
Intently thought, intensely felt: 552
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below, 555
And flows, and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his seal'd-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath im-
planted; 558
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,

Howe'er our stifled tears we banish;
When, struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried—those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure, 566
Unseen, unwept, but uncongeal'd,
And cherish'd most where least reveal'd.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft, 570
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share;
With all the consciousness that he
Had only pass'd a just decree; 576
That they had wrought their doom of
ill;

Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopp'd with care, a strength may
give, 580
By which the rest shall bloom and
live
All greenly fresh and wildly free:
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels, 585
And never more a leaf reveals.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

ADVERTISEMENT

WHEN this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. With some account of his life I have been furnished, by the kindness of a citizen of that republic, which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom:—

*François de Bonnivard, fils de Louis de Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel et Seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496. Il fit ses études à Turin: en 1510 Jean Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui résigna le Priuré de St. Victor, qui aboutissait aux murs de Genève, et qui formait un bénéfice considérable.

*Ce grand homme—(Bonnivard mérite ce titre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son cœur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils, le courage de ses démarches, l'étendue de ses connaissances, et la vivacité de son esprit),—ce grand homme, qui excitera l'admiration de tous ceux

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

qu'une vertu héroïque peut encore émouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les cœurs des Gênévois qui aiment Genève. Bonnard fut toujours un des plus fermes appuis : pour assurer la liberté de notre République, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne; il oublia son repos; il méprisa ses richesses; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d'une patrie qu'il honora de son choix; dès ce moment il la chérît comme le plus zélé de ses citoyens; il la servit avec l'impétuosité d'un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d'un philosophe et la chaleur d'un patriote.

'Il dit dans le commencement de son Histoire de Genève, que, dès qu'il eut commencé de lire l'histoire des nations, il se sentit entraîné par son goût pour les Républiques, dont il épousa toujours les intérêts : c'est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Genève pour sa patrie.

'Bonnard, encore jeune, s'annonça hautement comme le défenseur de Genève contre le Duc de Savoie et l'Evêque.

'En 1519, Bonnard devient le martyr de sa patrie. Le Duc de Savoie étant entré dans Genève avec cinq cent hommes, Bonnard craint le ressentiment du Duc; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l'accompagnaient, et conduit par ordre du Prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnard était malheureux dans ses voyages : comme ses malheurs n'avaient point ralenti son zèle pour Genève, il était toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçaient, et par conséquent il devait être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent et qui le mirent encore entre les mains du Duc de Savoie : ce Prince le fit enfermer dans le Château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusques en 1536; il fut alors délivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays de Vaud.

'Bonnard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Genève libre et réformée : la République s'empressa de lui témoigner sa reconnaissance, et de le dédommager des maux qu'il avait soufferts; elle le reçut Bourgeois de la ville au mois de Juin, 1536; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le Vicaire-Général, et elle lui assigna une pension de deux cent écus d'or tant qu'il séjournerait à Genève. Il fut admis dans le Conseil de Deux-Cent en 1537.

'Bonnard n'a pas fini d'être utile : après avoir travaillé à rendre Genève libre, il réussit à la rendre tolérante. Bonnard engagea le Conseil à accorder aux ecclésiastiques et aux paysans un tems suffisant pour examiner les propositions qu'on leur faisait; il réussit par sa douceur : on prêche toujours le Christianisme avec succès quand on le prêche avec charité.

'Bonnard fut savant : ses manuscrits, qui sont dans la bibliothèque publique, prouvent qu'il avait bien lu les auteurs classiques Latins, et qu'il avait approfondi la théologie et l'histoire. Ce grand homme aimait les sciences, et il croyait qu'elles pouvaient faire la gloire de Genève; aussi il ne négligea rien pour les fixer dans cette ville naissante; en 1551 il donna sa bibliothèque au public; elle fut le commencement de notre bibliothèque publique; et ces livres sont en partie les rares et belles éditions du quinzième siècle qu'on voit dans notre collection. Enfin, pendant la même année, ce bon patriote institua la République son héritière, à condition qu'elle emploierait ses biens à entretenir le collège dont on projetait la fondation.

'Il paraît que Bonnard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l'assurer, parcequ'il y a une lacune dans le Nécrologe depuis le mois de Juillet, 1570, jusques en 1571.'

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,

As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with
toil,

But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden
fare:

But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,

Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;

One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and
grey,

Dim with a dull imprison'd ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp: 35

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day, 41
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score, 45
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart, 54
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comfortor to each
With some new hope, or legend old, 61
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free, 65
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three, 69
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distress'd 77
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun: 85
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhor'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had
stood, 95
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer 101
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him his dungeon was a gulf, 105
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow; 109

Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave in-
thrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake 115
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds
were high 120
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

I said my nearer brother pined, 126
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care: 131
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him? 138
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head, 145
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bo'ids in twain.
He died, and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them as a boon to lay 152
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest. 157
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd, and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love; 161
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face, 166
The infant love of all his race,

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

IX

His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought 169
 To hoard my life, that his might be
 Less wretched now, and one day free;
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was wither'd on the stalk away. 175
 Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood:
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean
 Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin delirious with its dread;
 But these were horrors—this was woe
 Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
 He faded, and so calm and meek, 186
 So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
 So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
 And grieved for those he left behind;
 With all the while a cheek whose bloom
 Was as a mockery of the tomb, 191
 Whose tints as gently sunk away
 As a departing rainbow's ray;
 An eye of most transparent light,
 That almost made the dungeon bright,
 And not a word of murmur, not 196
 A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
 A little talk of better days,
 A little hope my own to raise,
 For I was sunk in silence—lost 200
 In this last loss, of all the most;
 And then the sighs he would suppress
 Of fainting nature's feebleness,
 More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
 I listen'd, but I could not hear; 205
 I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
 I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
 Would not be thus admonished;
 I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
 I burst my chain with one strong bound,
 And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
 I only stirr'd in this black spot, 212
 I only lived, I only drew
 The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
 The last, the sole, the dearest link 215
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to
 breathe: 220
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas! my own was full as chill;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know 225
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too:
 I had no thought, no feeling—none—
 Among the stones I stood a stone, 236
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
 It was not night, it was not day; 240
 It was not even the dungeon-light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight,
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness without a place;
 There were no stars, no earth, no time,
 No check, no change, no good, no
 crime, 246
 But silence, and a stirless breath
 Which neither was of life nor death;
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motion-
 less! 256

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
 It was the carol of a bird;
 It ceased, and then it came again,
 The sweetest song ear ever heard,
 And mine was thankful till my eyes
 Ran over with the glad surprise, 256
 And they that moment could not see
 I was the mate of misery;
 But then by dull degrees came back
 My senses to their wonted track; 260
 I saw the dungeon walls and floor
 Close slowly round me as before,
 I saw the glimmer of the sun
 Creeping as it before had done,
 But through the crevice where it came
 That bird was perch'd, as fond and
 tame, 266
 And tamer than upon the tree;
 A lovely bird, with azure wings,
 And song that said a thousand things,
 And seem'd to say them all for me!
 I never saw its like before, 271
 I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
 It seem'd like me to want a mate,
 But was not half so desolate,
 And it was come to love me when
 None lived to love me so again, 276
 And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
 Had brought me back to feel and think.
 I know not if it late were free,
 Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
 But knowing well captivity, 281
 Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
 Or if it were, in winged guise,
 A visitant from Paradise;
 For—Heaven forgive that thought! the
 while 285
 Which made me both to weep and smile—

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew, 289
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,
Lone as the corse within its shroud,
Lone as a solitary cloud,—

A single cloud on a sunny day, 295
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate; 301
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain, 305
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one, 310
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed, 315
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart felt blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all 320
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery; 325
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye. 331

XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in
frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush 337

O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile, 342

The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers
growing, 349

Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly; 355
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as if a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppress,
Had almost need of such a rest. 365

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free; 370
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,

I learn'd to love despair. 374
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home: 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place, 385
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

MAZEPPA

ADVERTISEMENT

'CELUI qui remplissait alors cette place était un gentilhomme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat de Podolie: il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un gentilhomme Polonais ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état. Le cheval, qui était du pays de l'Ukraine, y retourna, et y porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelques paysans le secoururent: il resta longtems parmi eux, et se signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande considération parmi les Cosaques: sa réputation s'augmentant de jour en jour obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de l'Ukraine.'—VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII.* p. 196.

'Le roi fuyant, et poursuivi, eut son cheval tué sous lui; le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout son sang, lui donna le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans sa fuite, ce conquérant qui n'avait pu y monter pendant la bataille.'—P. 216.

'Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. Le carrosse, où il était, rompit dans la marche; on le remit à cheval. Pour comble de disgrâce, il s'égara pendant la nuit dans un bois; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues plus insupportables par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d'un arbre, en danger d'être surpris à tout moment par les vainqueurs, qui le cherchaient de tous côtés.'—P. 218.

I

'Twas after dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war, 5
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year, 10
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II

Such was the hazard of the die; 15
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid;
And not a voice was heard t' upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour, 21
When truth had nought to dread from power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own—and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league 25
Of well sustain'd but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests, darkling
The watch-fires in the distance spark-
ling—
The beacons of surrounding foes—
A king must lay his limbs at length.
Are these the laurels and repose 31
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In outworn nature's agony;

His wounds were stiff, his limbs were
stark; 35

The heavy hour was chill and dark;
The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid;
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall, 40
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day 46
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed;
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need. 52
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade—
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's Hetman, calm and bold;
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his
horse, 58

And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his
mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his
rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse 64
To browse beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too,
Whate'er was to be done, would do.

MAZEPPA

Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
 All Tartar-like he carried him; 71
 Obey'd his voice, and came to call,
 And knew him in the midst of all:
 Though thousands were around,—and
 Night,
 Without a star, pursued her flight,—
 That steed from sunset until dawn 76
 His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
 And laid his lance beneath his oak,
 Felt if his arms in order good 80
 The long day's march had well with-
 stood—

If still the powder fill'd the pan,
 And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
 His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
 And whether they had chafed his belt;
 And next the venerable man, 86
 From out his havresack and can,

Prepared and spread his slender stock;
 And to the monarch and his men
 The whole or portion offer'd then 90
 With far less of iniquitude

Than courtiers at a banquet would.
 And Charles of this his slender share
 With smiles partook a moment there,
 To force of cheer a greater show, 95
 And seem above both wounds and woe;
 And then he said—'Of all our band,
 Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
 In skirmish, march, or forage, none
 Can less have said or more have done
 Than thee, Mazeppa! on the earth 101

So fit a pair had never birth,
 Since Alexander's days till now,
 As thy Bucephalus and thou:
 All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
 For pricking on o'er flood and field.'

Mazeppa answer'd—'Ill betide 107
 The school wherein I learn'd to ride!'
 Quoth Charles—'Old Hetman, where-
 fore so,

Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?'
 Mazeppa said—'Twere long to tell;
 And we have many a league to go,
 With every now and then a blow, 113
 And ten to one at least the foe,
 Before our steeds may graze at ease
 Beyond the swift Borysthene's:

And, Sir, your limbs have need of rest,
 And I will be the sentinel

Of this your troop.'—'But I request,'
 Said Sweden's monarch, 'thou wilt
 tell 120

This tale of thine, and I may reap,
 Perchance, from this the boon of sleep
 For at this moment from my eyes
 The hope of present slumber flies.'

'Well, Sir, with such a hope, I'll track
 My seventy years of memory back: 126

I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,—
 Ay, 'twas,—when Casimir was king—
 John Casimir,—I was his page
 Six summers, in my earlier age: 130
 A learned monarch, faith! was he,
 And most unlike your majesty;
 He made no wars, and did not gain
 New realms to lose them back again;
 And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
 He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
 Not that he had no cares to vex; 137
 He loved the muses and the sex;
 And sometimes these so froward are,
 They made him wish himself at war;
 But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
 Another mistress, or new book: 142
 And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
 All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
 To gaze upon his splendid court,
 And dames, and chiefs, of princely port:
 He was the Polish Solomon, 147
 So sung his poets, all but one,
 Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
 And boasted that he could not flatter.
 It was a court of jousts and mimes, 151
 Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
 Even I for once produced some verses,
 And sign'd my odes "Despairing Thyrsis."
 There was a certain Palatine, 155

A count of far and high descent,
 Rich as a salt or silver mine;
 And he was proud, ye may divine,
 As if from heaven he had been sent:
 He had such wealth in blood and ore
 As few could match beneath the
 throne; 161

And he would gaze upon his store,
 And o'er his pedigree would pore,
 Until by some confusion led,
 Which almost look'd like want of head,
 He thought their merits were his own.
 His wife was not of his opinion; 167
 His junior she by thirty years,
 Grew daily tired of his dominion;

And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
 To virtue a few farewell tears, 171
 A restless dream or two, some glances
 At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and
 dances,

Awaited but the usual chances,
 Those happy accidents which render
 The coldest dames so very tender, 176
 To deck her count with titles given,
 'Tis said, as passports into heaven;
 But, strange to say, they rarely boast
 Of these, who have deserved them most.

V

'I was a goodly stripling then; 181
 At seventy years I so may say,
 That there were few, or boys or men,
 Who, in my dawning time of day,
 Of vassal or of knight's degree, 185
 Could vie in vanities with me;

For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all is rugged now;

For time, and care, and war, have
plough'd 190

My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavow'd
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday;
This change was wrought, too, long ere
age 195

Had ta'en my features for his page;
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree, 200
With starless skies my canopy.

But let me on: Theresa's form—
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;

And yet I find no words to tell 206
The shape of her I loved so well:
She had the Asiatic eye,

Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
Dark as above us is the sky; 211
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the
stream, 214

Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
All love, half languor, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high,
As though it were a joy to die.

A brow like a midsummer lake, 220
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within.
A cheek and lip—but why proceed?

I loved her then, I love her still;
And such as I am, love indeed 226

In fierce extremes—in good and ill.
But still we love even in our age,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past, 230
As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI

'We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd,
She did not speak, and yet replied;
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines—
Involuntary sparks of thought, 236
Which strike from out the heart o'er-
wrought,

And form a strange intelligence,
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds,
Without their will, young hearts and
minds: 241

Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.

I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,
And still reluctant distance kept, 245
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion—then, even then,

I long'd, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again, 250

The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour.—There is a game,
A frivolous and foolish play,
Wherewith we while away the day;
It is—I have forgot the name— 255

And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forget:
I reck'd not if I won or lost,

It was enough for me to be
So near to hear, and oh! to see 260

The being whom I loved the most.
I watch'd her as a sentinel,
(May ours this dark night watch as
well!)

Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved 266
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Play'd on for hours, as if her will
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot.

Then through my brain the thought
did pass 271

Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,

All incoherent as they were; 276
Their eloquence was little worth,

But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
And one refusal no rebuff. 281

VII

'I loved, and was beloved again—
They tell me, Sire, you never knew
Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
I shorten all my joy or pain; 285

To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.

I am—or rather was—a prince, 290
A chief of thousands, and could lead
Them on where each would foremost
bleed;

But could not o'er myself evince
The like control—But to resume:

I loved, and was beloved again; 295
In sooth, it is a happy doom,

But yet where happiest ends in pain.
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery Expectation's dower. 300

My days and nights were nothing—all
Except that hour, which doth recall,

MAZEPPA

In the long lapse from youth to age,
 No other like itself: I'd give
 The Ukraine back again to live 305
 It o'er once more, and be a page,
 The happy page, who was the lord
 Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
 And had no other gem nor wealth
 Save nature's gift of youth and health.
 We met in secret—doubly sweet, 311
 Some say, they find it so to meet;
 I know not that—I would have given
 My life but to have call'd her mine
 In the full view of earth and heaven;
 For I did oft and long repine 316
 That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII

'For lovers there are many eyes,
 And such there were on us; the devil
 On such occasions should be civil—
 The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,
 It might be some untoward saint,
 Who would not be at rest too long,
 But to his pious bile gave vent—
 But one fair night, some lurking spies
 Surprised and seized us both. 326
 The Count was something more than
 wroth—
 I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
 All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
 What 'gainst their numbers could I do?
 'Twas near his castle, far away 331
 From city or from succour near,
 And almost on the break of day;
 I did not think to see another,
 My moments seem'd reduced to few;
 And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
 And, it may be, a saint or two, 337
 As I resign'd me to my fate,
 They led me to the castle gate:
 Theresa's doom I never knew, 340
 Our lot was henceforth separate.
 An angry man, ye may opine,
 Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
 And he had reason good to be, 344
 But he was most enraged lest such
 An accident should chance to touch
 Upon his future pedigree;
 Nor less amazed, that such a blot
 His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
 While he was highest of his line; 350
 Because unto himself he seem'd
 The first of men, nor less he deem'd
 In others' eyes, and most in mine.
 'Sdeath! with a page—perchance a king
 Had reconciled him to the thing; 355
 But with a stripling of a page—
 I felt, but cannot paint his rage.

IX

"Bring forth the horse!"—the horse
 was brought;
 In truth, he was a noble steed,
 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed, 360

Who look'd as though the speed of
 thought
 Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
 Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
 With spur and bridle undefiled—
 'Twas but a day he had been caught;
 And snorting, with erected mane, 366
 And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
 In the full foam of wrath and dread
 To me the desert-born was led:
 They bound me on, that menial throng;
 Upon his back with many a thong; 371
 Then loosed him with a sudden lash—
 Away!—away!—and on we dash!
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X

'Away!—away! My breath was gone,
 I saw not where he hurried on: 376
 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
 And on he foam'd—away!—away!
 The last of human sounds which rose,
 As I was darted from my foes, 380
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
 Which on the wind came roaring after
 A moment from that rabble rout;
 With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
 And snapp'd the cord, which to the
 mane 385
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
 And, writhing half my form about,
 Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the
 tread,
 The thunder of my courser's speed,
 Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
 It vexes me—for I would fain 391
 Have paid their insult back again.
 I paid it well in after days:
 There is not of that castle gate,
 Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass, 397
 Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
 Where stood the hearth-stone of the
 hall;
 And many a time ye there might pass,
 Nor dream that e'er that fortress was.
 I saw its turrets in a blaze, 402
 Their crackling battlements all cleft,
 And the hot lead pour down like rain
 From off the scorch'd and blackening
 roof, 405
 Whose thickness was not vengeance-
 proof.
 They little thought that day of pain,
 When launch'd, as on the lightning's
 flash,
 They bade me to destruction dash, 409
 That one day I should come again,
 With twice five thousand horse, to thank
 The Count for his un courteous ride.
 They play'd me then a bitter prank,
 When, with the wild horse for my
 guide, 414

They bound me to his foaming flank:
At length I play'd them one as frank
For time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven, 420
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI

'Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind;
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequer'd with the northern light:
Town—village—none were on our track
But a wild plain of far extent, 430
And bounded by a forest black;
And, save the scarce-seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man. The year before 435
A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod:
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by—
I could have answer'd with a sigh—
But fast we fled, away, away, 442
And I could neither sigh nor pray;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career: 447
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slacken'd in his speed;
But no—my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became:
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright: 455
I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran
o'er; 461
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII

'We near'd the wild wood—'twas so
wide,
I saw no bounds on either side; 465
'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
And strips the forest in its haste,—
But these were few and far between,
Set thick with shrubs more young and
green, 471

Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red, 475
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark the raven's beak 480
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart—and well it were, 485
Or else a different lot were mine—
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarr'd with cold;
My bonds forbad to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves be-
hind; 492
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
Where'er we flew they follow'd on, 497
Nor left us with the morning sun;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the
wood, 500
And through the night had heard their
feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish—if it must be so— 505
At bay, destroying many a foe!
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd the goal already won;
But now I doubted strength and speed.
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow 512
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he
pass'd—
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—
A woman piqued—who has her will.

XIII

'The wood was past; 'twas more than
noon, 521
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem, 525
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:

MAZEPPA

And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path, 530
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood,
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like 535
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd
round,

I seem'd to sink upon the ground; 540
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew
sore,
And throb'd awhile, then beat no
more:

The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel, 545
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'er-tortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go, 550
And strove to wake; but could not
make

My senses climb up from below:
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm,
My undulating life was as 557
The fancied lights that fitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain; 560
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must 565
Feel far more ere we turn to dust:
No matter; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face—before—and now.

XIV

'My thoughts came back; where was I?
Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold, 571
And throb by throb,—till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflow'd, though thick and
chill;

My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight return'd, though dim; alas!
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
There was a gleam too of the sky, 580
Studded with stars;—it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,

And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore. 586
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength

My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly
braves, 590

And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized, 594

For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew. 600

XV

'With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank. 604
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the
night,

And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight; 609
And here and there a speck of white,
Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right:
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate 615
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose 619
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men. 624

XVI

'Onward we went—but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power 629
To guide him forward in that hour,
But useless all to me:
His new-born tameness nought avail'd—
My limbs were bound; my force had
fail'd,

Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried 635
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolong'd their pain: 640

The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming
sun—

How slow, alas! he came! 644
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it roll'd away—

Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
Nor fill'd the earth, from his deep
throne, 651
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII

'Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around, behind, before.
What boot'd it to traverse o'er 656
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel, none of toil; 660
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst, 665
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were—or seem'd—alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stir? 671
No, no! from out the forest prance

A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse, and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod, 682
And flanks unscar'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,

Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight re-nerv'd my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell; 691
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immovable,

His first and last career is done!
On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong:
They stop, they start, they snuff the
air,
Gallop a moment here and there,

Approach, retire, wheel round and
round, 700

Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,

Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide; 705
They snort, they foam, neigh, swerve
aside,

And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.

They left me there to my despair,
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me—and there we lay,

The dying on the dead! 715
I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless
head.

'And there from morn to twilight
bound,

I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see 720
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,

That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Present the worst and last of fears:
Inevitable—even a boon, 726

Nor more unkind for coming soon,
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare

That prudence might escape: 730
At times both wish'd-for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close

To even intolerable woes,

And welcome in no shape. 735
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
Whose heritage was misery: 740

For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,

Hath nought to hope, and nought to
leave;

And, save the future, (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good, 745
But as their nerves may be endued,)

With nought perhaps to grieve:
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his
friend,

Appears, to his distemper'd eyes, 750
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.

To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,

MAZEPPA

But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears.
Guardon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him
power 760
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII

'The sun was sinking—still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening
steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay, 765
And my dim eyes of death had need;
No hope arose of being freed:
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly, 770
Who scarce would wait till both should
die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit 776
I could have smote, but lack'd the
strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling
noise, 780
Which scarcely could be called a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering
beam, 786
And all the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath, 790
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my
brain—
A gasp, a thro'p, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more. 795

XIX

'I woke—where was I?—Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie? 800
And is it mortal yon bright eye,
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that my former trance
Could not as yet be o'er. 805
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall;
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;

For ever and anon she threw 810
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free:
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be,—
But that I lived, and was released 815
From adding to the vulture's feast:
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
But fail'd—and she approach'd, and
made 820
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free; 824
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music follow'd her light feet: 830
But those she call'd were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all 835
Were near, at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return:—while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone. 839

XX

'She came with mother and with sire—
What need of more?—I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain,
They bore me to the nearest hut, 845
They brought me into life again—
Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain, 849
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne,—
What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!
To-morrow the Borysthene 855
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank, and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!'—The Hetman
threw 860
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest when'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, he wonder'd not,—
The king had been an hour asleep.

THE ISLAND

OR

CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMRADES

ADVERTISEMENT

THE foundation of the following story will be found partly in Lieutenant Bligh's 'Narrative of the Mutiny and Seizure of the *Bounty*, in the South Seas, in 1789'; and partly in 'Mariner's Account of the *Tonga Islands*,' *Genoa*, 1823.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

THE morning watch was come; the vessel
lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid
way;
The cloven billow flash'd from off her
prow
In furrows form'd by that majestic plough;
The waters with their world were all be-
fore;
Behind, the South Sea's many an islet
shore.
The quiet night, now dappling, 'gan to
wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning
main;
The dolphins, not unconscious of the
day,
Swam high, as eager of the coming ray;
The stars from broader beams began to
creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the
deep;
The sail resumed its lately shadow'd white,
And the wind flutter'd with a freshening
flight;
The purpling ocean owns the coming sun,
But ere he break—a deed is to be done.

II

The gallant chief within his cabin slept,
Secure in those by whom the watch was
kept:
His dreams were of Old England's wel-
come shore,
Of toils rewarded, and of dangers o'er;
His name was added to the glorious roll
Of those who search the storm-surrounded
Pole.
The worst was over, and the rest seem'd
sure,
And why should not his slumber be
secure?
Alas! his deck was trod by unwilling feet,
And wilder hands would hold the vessel's
sheet;

Young hearts, which languish'd for some
sunny isle,
Where summer years and summer women
smile;
Men without country, who, too long
estranged,
Had found no native home, or found it
changed,
And, half uncivilised, prefer'd the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain wave—
The gushing fruits that nature gave un-
till'd;
The wood without a path but where they
will'd;
The field o'er which promiscuous Plenty
pour'd
Her horn; the equal land without a lord;
The wish—which ages have not yet subdued
In man—to have no master save his mood;
The earth, whose mine was on its face, un-
sold,
The glowing sun and produce all its gold;
The freedom which can call each grot a
home;
The general garden, where all steps may
roam,
Where Nature owns a nation as her child,
Exulting in the enjoyment of the wild;
Their shells, their fruits, the only wealth
they know,
Their unexploring navy, the canoe;
Their sport, the dashing breakers and the
chase;
Their strangest sight, an European face:—
Such was the country which these stran-
gers yearn'd
To see again; a sight they dearly earn'd.

III

Awake, bold Bligh! the foe is at the gate!
Awake! awake!—Alas! it is too late!
Fiercely beside thy cot the mutineer
Stands, and proclaims the reign of rage
and fear.
Thy limbs are bound, the bayonet at thy
breast;
The hands, which trembled at thy voice,
arrest;

THE ISLAND

[CANTO I

Dragg'd o'er the deck, no more at thy
command
The obedient helm shall veer, the sail ex-
pand;
That savage spirit, which would lull by
wrath
Its desperate escape from duty's path,
Glares round thee, in the scarce-believing
eyes
Of those who fear the chief they sacrifice:
For ne'er can man his conscience all as-
suage,
Unless he drain the wine of passion—rage.

IV

In vain, not silenced by the eye of death,
Thou call'st the loyal with thy menaced
breath:—
They come not; they are few, and, over-
awed,
Must acquiesce, while sterner hearts ap-
plaud.
In vain thou dost demand the cause: a
curse
Is all the answer, with the threat of worse.
Full in thine eyes is waved the glittering
blade,
Close to thy throat the pointed bayonet
laid.
The levell'd muskets circle round thy
breast
In hands as steel'd to do the deadly rest.
Thou dar'st them to their worst, exclaim-
ing—'Fire!'
But they who pitied not could yet admire;
Some lurking remnant of their former
awe
Restrain'd them longer than their broken
law;
They would not dip their souls at once in
blood,
But left thee to the mercies of the flood.

V

'Hoist out the boat!' was now the leader's
cry;
And who dare answer 'No!' to Mutiny,
In the first dawning of the drunken hour,
The Saturnalia of unhop'd-for power?
The boat is lower'd with all the haste of
hate,
With its slight plank between thee and thy
fate;
Her only cargo such a scant supply
As promises the death their hands deny;
And just enough of water and of bread
To keep, some days, the dying from the
dead:
Some cordage, canvas, sails, and lines, and
twine,
But treasures all to hermits of the brine,
Were added after, to the earnest prayer
Of those who saw no hope, save sea and
air;

And last, that trembling vassal of the
Pole—
The feeling compass—Navigation's soul.

VI

And now the self-elected chief finds time
To stun the first sensation of his crime,
And raise it in his followers—'Ho! the
bow!'
Lest passion should return to reason's
shoal.
'Brandy for heroes!' Burke could once
exclaim—
No doubt a liquid path to epic fame;
And such the new-born heroes found it
here,
And drain'd the draught with an applaud-
ing cheer.
'Huzza! for Otaheite!' was the cry.
How strange such shouts from sons of
Mutiny!
The gentle island, and the genial soil,
The friendly hearts, the feasts without a
toil,
The courteous manners but from nature
caught,
The wealth unhoarded, and the love un-
bought;
Could these have charms for rudest sea-
boys, driven
Before the mast by every wind of heaven?
And now, even now prepared with others'
woes
To earn mild Virtue's vain desire, repose?
Alas! such is our nature! all but aim
At the same end by pathways not the same;
Our means, our birth, our nation, and our
name,
Our fortune, temper, even our outward
frame,
Are far more potent o'er our yielding clay
Than aught we know beyond our little
day.
Yet still there whispers the small voice
within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er
Glory's din:
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God.

VII

The launch is crowded with the faithful
few
Who wait their chief, a melancholy crew:
But some remain'd reluctant on the deck
Of that proud vessel—now a moral
wreck—
And view'd their captain's fate with piteous
eyes:
While others scoff'd his augur'd miseries,
Sneer'd at the prospect of his pigmy sail,
And the slight bark so laden and so frail.
The tender nautilus, who steers his prow,
The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe,

CANTO I]

The ocean Mab, the fairy of the sea, 135
Seems far less fragile, and, alas! more free.
He, when the lightning-wing'd tornados
sweep

The surge, is safe—his port is in the deep—
And triumphs o'er the armadas of man-
kind,

Which shake the world, yet crumble in the
wind. 140

VIII

When all was now prepared, the vessel
clear

Which hail'd her master in the mutineer,
A seaman, less obdurate than his mates,
Show'd the vain pity which but irritates;
Watch'd his late chieftain with exploring
eye, 145

And told, in signs, repentant sympathy;
Held the moist shaddock to his parched
mouth,

Which felt exhaustion's deep and bitter
drouth.

But soon observed, this guardian was with-
drawn,

Nor further mercy clouds rebellion's
dawn. 150

Then forward stepp'd the bold and fro-
ward boy

His chief had cherish'd only to destroy,
And, pointing to the helpless prow be-
neath,
Exclaim'd, 'Depart at once! delay is
death!'

Yet then, even then, his feelings ceased
not all: 155

In that last moment could a word recall
Remorse for the black deed as yet half
done,

And what he hid from many show'd to
one:

When Bligh in stern reproach demanded
where

Was now his grateful sense of former care?
Where all his hopes to see his name aspire,
And blazon Britain's thousand glories
higher? 162

His feverish lips thus broke their gloomy
spell,

'Tis that! 'tis that! I am in hell! in hell!'
No more he said: but urging to the bark
His chief, commits him to his fragile ark;
These the sole accents from his tongue
that fell, 167

But volumes lurk'd below his fierce fare-
well.

IX

The arctic sun rose broad above the wave;
The breeze now sank, now whisper'd from
his cave; 170

As on the Æolian harp, his fitful wings
Now swell'd, now flutter'd o'er his ocean
strings.

THE ISLAND

With slow, despairing oar, the abandon'd
skiff

Ploughs its drear progress to the scarce-
seen cliff, 174

Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main:
That boat and ship shall never meet again!

But 'tis not mine to tell their tale of grief,
Their constant peril, and their scant relief;
Their days of danger, and their nights of
pain;

Their manly courage even when deem'd in
vain; 180

The sapping famine, rendering scarce a son
Known to his mother in the skeleton;
The ills that lessen'd still their little store,
And starved even Hunger till he wrung no
more;

The varying frowns and favours of the
deep, 185

That now almost ingulfs, then leaves to
creep

With crazy oar and shatter'd strength along
The tide that yields reluctant to the strong;
The incessant fever of that arid thirst

Which welcomes, as a well, the clouds that
burst 190

Above their naked bones, and feels delight
In the cold drenching of the stormy night,
And from the outspread canvas gladly
wrings

A drop to moisten life's all-gasping
springs; 194

The savage foe escaped, to seek again
More hospitable shelter from the main;
The ghastly spectres which were doom'd
at last

To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
As ever the dark annals of the deep

Disclosed for man to dread or woman
weep. 200

We leave them to their fate, but not un-
known

Nor unredress'd. Revenge may have her
own:

Roused discipline aloud proclaims their
cause,

And injured navies urge their broken laws.
Pursue we on his track the mutineer,

Whom distant vengeance had not taught
to fear. 206

Wide o'er the wave—away! away! away!
Once more his eyes shall hail the welcome
bay;

Once more the happy shores without a law
Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw;

Nature, and Nature's goddess—woman—
woos 211

To lands where, save their conscience,
none accuse;

Where all partake the earth without dispute,
And bread itself is gather'd as a fruit;

THE ISLAND

[CANTO I

Where none contest the fields, the woods,
the streams:—²¹⁵

The goldless age, where gold disturbs no
dreams,

Inhabits or inhabited the shore,
Till Europe taught them better than be-
fore:

Bestow'd her customs, and amended
theirs,

But left her vices also to their heirs, ²²⁰
Away with this! behold them as they were,

Do good with Nature, or with Nature err,
'Huzza! for Otaheite!' was the cry,

As stately swept the gallant vessel by.
The breeze springs up; the lately flapping

sail ²²⁵
Extends its arch before the growing gale;

In swifter ripples stream aside the seas,
Which her bold bow flings off with dash-
ing ease.

Thus Argo plough'd the Euxine's virgin
foam,

But those she wafted still look'd back to
home: ²³⁰

These spurn their country with their rebel
bark,

And fly her as the raven fled the ark;
And yet they seek to nestle with the dove,
And tame their fiery spirits down to love.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

How pleasant were the songs of Toobonai,
When summer's sun went down the coral
bay!

Come, let us to the islet's softest shade,
And hear the warbling birds! the damsel
said:

The wood-dove from the forest-depth
shall coo, ⁵

Like voices of the gods from Bolotoo,
We'll cull the flowers that grow above the
dead,

For these most bloom where rests the war-
rior's head;

And we will sit in twilight's face, and see
The sweet moon glancing through the tooa
tree, ¹⁰

The lofty accents of whose sighing bough
Shall sadly please us as we lean below;

Or climb the steep, and view the surf in
vain

Wrestle with rocky giants o'er the main,
Which spurn in columns back the baffled
spray. ¹⁵

How beautiful are these! how happy they,
Who, from the toil and tumult of their
lives,

Steal to look down where nought but
ocean strives!

Even he too loves at times the blue lagoon,
And smoothes his ruffled mane beneath
the moon. ²⁰

II

Yes—from the sepulchre we'll gather
flowers,

Then feast like spirits in their promised
bowers,

Then-plunge and revel in the rolling surf,
Then lay our limbs along the tender turf,

And, wet and shining from the sportive
toil, ²⁵

Anoint our bodies with the fragrant oil,
And plait our garlands gather'd from the
grave,

And wear the wreaths that sprung from
out the brave.

But lo! night comes, the Mooa woos us
back,

The sound of mats are heard along our
track;

Anon the torchlight dance shall fling its
sheen ³¹

In flashing mazes o'er the Marly's green;
And we too will be there; we too recall

The memory bright with many a festival,
Ere Fiji blew the shell of war, when foes

For the first time were wafted in canoes.
Alas! for them the flower of mankind bleeds;

Alas! for them our fields are rank with
weeds:

Forgotten is the rapture, or unknown,
Of wandering with the moon and love
alone. ⁴⁰

But be it so:—they taught us how to wield
The club, and rain our arrows o'er the field:

Now let them reap the harvest of their art!
But feast to-night! to-morrow we depart.

Strike up the dance! the cava bowl fill
high! ⁴⁵

Drain every drop!—to-morrow we may die.
In summer garments be our limbs array'd;

Around our waists the tappa's white dis-
play'd;

Thick wreaths shall form our coronal, like
spring's,

And round our necks shall glance the
hooni strings; ⁵⁰

So shall their brighter hues contrast the
glow

Of the dusk bosoms that beat high below.

III

But now the dance is o'er—yet stay awhile;
Ah, pause! nor yet put out the social smile.

To-morrow for the Mooa we depart, ⁵⁵
But not to-night—to-night is for the heart.

Again bestow the wreaths we gently woo,
Ye young enchantresses of gay Licoo!

How lovely are your forms! how every
sense

Bows to your beauties, soften'd, but in-
tense, ⁶⁰

Like to the flowers on Mataloco's steep,
Which fling their fragrance far athwart
the deep!—

We too will see Licoo; but—oh! my heart!—

What do I say?—to-morrow we depart!

IV

Thus rose a song—the harmony of times
Before the winds blew Europe o'er these
climes, 66

True, they had vices—such are Nature's
growth—

But only the barbarian's—we have both;
The sordid of civilisation, mix'd

With all the savage which man's fall hath
fix'd, 70

Who hath not seen Dissimulation's reign,
The prayers of Abel link'd to deeds of
Cain?

Who such would see may from his lattice
view

The Old World more degraded than the
New,—

Now new no more, save where Columbia
rears 75

Twin giants, born by Freedom to her
spheres,

Where Chimborazo, over air, earth, wave,
Glares with his Titan eye, and sees no slave.

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
Which to the dead a lingering fame con-
veys 80

In song, where fame as yet hath left no sign
Beyond the sound whose charm is half
divine;

Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
But yields young history all to harmony;
A boy Achilles, with the centaur's lyre 85

In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
For one long-cherish'd ballad's simple
stave,

Rung from the rock, or mingled with the
wave,

Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
Or gathering mountain echoes as they
glide, 90

Hath greater power o'er each true heart
and ear,

Than all the columns Conquest's minions
rear;

Invites, when hieroglyphics are a theme
For sages' labours, or the student's dream;
Attracts, when History's volumes are a
toll,— 95

The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
Such was this rude rhyme—rhyme is of
the rude—

But such inspired the Norseman's solitude,
Who came and conquer'd; such, wherever
rise 99

Lands which no foes destroy or civilise,
Exist: and what can our accomplish'd art
Of verse do more than reach the awaken'd
heart?

VI

And sweetly now those untaught melodies
Broke the luxurious silence of the skies,
The sweet siesta of a summer day, 105

The tropic afternoon of Toobonal,
When every flower was bloom, and air
was balm,

And the first breath began to stir the palm,
The first yet voiceless wind to urge the wave

All gently to refresh the thirsty cave,
Where sat the songstress with the stranger
boy, 111

Who taught her passion's desolating joy,
Too powerful over every heart, but most

O'er those who know not how it may be
lost;

O'er those who, burning in the new-born
fire, 115

Like martyrs revel in their funeral pyre,
With such devotion to their ecstasy,

That life knows no such rapture as to die:
And die they do; for earthly life has nought

Match'd with that burst of nature, even
in thought; 120

And all our dreams of better life above
But close in one eternal gush of love.

There sat the gentle savage of the wild,
In growth a woman, though in years a
child,

As childhood dates within our colder
clime, 125

Where nought is ripen'd rapidly save crime;
The infant of an infant world, as pure

From nature—lovely, warm, and pre-
mature;

Dusky like night, but night with all her
stars, 129

Or cavern sparkling with its native spars;
With eyes that were a language and a spell,

A form like Aphrodite's in her shell,
With all her loves around her on the deep,

Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep;
Yet full of life—for through her tropic
cheek 135

The blush would make its way, and all but
speak:

The sun-born blood suffused her neck, and
threw

O'er her clear nut-brown skin a lucid hue,
Like coral reddening through the darken'd
wave, 141

Which draws the diver to the crimson cave.
Such was this daughter of the southern
seas, 145

Herself a billow in her energies,
To bear the bark of others' happiness,

Nor feel a sorrow till their joy grew less:
Her wild and warm yet faithful bosom
knew 149

No joy like what it gave; her hopes ne'er
drew

THE ISLAND

[CANTO II

Aught from experience, that chill touch-
stone, whose
Sad proof reduces all things from their
tales:

She fear'd no ill, because she knew it not,
Or what she knew was soon—too soon—
forgot: 150

Her smiles and tears had pass'd, as light
winds pass

O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
Whose depths unsearch'd, and fountains
from the hill,

Restore their surface, in itself so still,
Until the earthquake tear the naiad's cave,
Root up the spring, and trample on the
wave, 156

And crush the living waters to a mass,
The amphibious desert of the dank mo-
rass!

And must their fate be hers? The eternal
change

But grasps humanity with quicker range;
And they who fall but fall as worlds will
fall, 161

To rise, if just, a spirit o'er them all.

VIII

And who is he? the blue-eyed northern child
Of isles more known to man, but scarce
less wild;

The fair-hair'd offspring of the Hebrides,
Where roars the Pentland with its whirling
seas; 166

Rock'd in his cradle by the roaring wind,
The tempest-born in body and in mind,
His young eyes opening on the ocean—

Had from that moment deem'd the deep
his home, 170

The giant comrade of his pensive moods,
The sharer of his craggy solitudes,
The only Mentor of his youth, where'er
His bark was borne; the sport of wave and
air;

A careless thing, who placed his choice in
chance, 175

Nursed by the legends of his land's ro-
mance;

Eager to hope, but not less firm to bear,
Acquainted with all feelings save despair.
Placed in the Arab's clime, he would have
been

As bold a rover as the sands have seen,
And braved their thirst with as enduring
lip 181

As Ishmael, wafted on his desert-ship;
Fix'd upon Chili's shore, a proud cacique;
On Hellas' mountains, a rebellious Greek;
Born in a tent, perhaps a Tamerlane;

Bred to a throne, perhaps unfit to reign.
For the same soul that rends its path to
away, 187

If rear'd to such, can find no further prey
Beyond itself, and must retrace its way,

Plunging for pleasure into pain: the same
Spirit which made a Nero, Rome's worst
shame, 191

A humbler state and discipline of heart,
Had form'd his glorious namesake's
counterpart;

But grant his vices, grant them all his own,
How small their theatre without a throne!

IX

Thou smilest:—these comparisons seem
high 196

To those who scan all things with dazzled
eye;

Link'd with the unknown name of one
whose doom

Has nought to do with glory or with Rome,
With Chili, Hellas, or with Araby; 200
Thou smilest?—Smile; 'tis better thus than
sigh;

Yet such he might have been; he was a man,
A soaring spirit, ever in the van,
A patriot hero or despotic chief,

To form a nation's glory or its grief, 205
Born under auspices which make us more
Or less than we delight to ponder o'er.

But these are visions; say, what was he
here?

A blooming boy, a truant mutineer.
The fair-hair'd Torquil, free as ocean's
spray, 210

The husband of the bride of Toobonai.

X

By Neuha's side he sate, and watch'd the
waters,—

Neuha, the sun-flower of the island daugh-
ters,

Highborn, (a birth at which the herald
smiles,

Without a scutcheon for these secret
isles.) 215

Of a long race, the valiant and the free,
The naked knights of savage chivalry,

Whose grassy cairns ascend along the
shore;

And thine—I've seen—Achilles! do no
more.

She, when the thunder-bearing strangers
came, 220

In vast canoes, begirt with bolts of flame,
Topp'd with tall trees, which, loftier than
the palm,

Seem'd rooted in the deep amidst its calm:
But when the winds awaken'd, shot forth
wings

Broad as the cloud along the horizon
flings, 225

And sway'd the waves like cities of the sea,
Making the very billows look less free;—

She, with her paddling oar and dancing
prow,

Shot through the surf, like reindeer
through the snow,

Swift-gliding o'er the breaker's whitening
edge, ²³⁰
Light as a nereid in her ocean sledge,
And gazed and wonder'd at the giant hulk,
Which heaved from wave to wave its
trampling bulk.
The anchor dropp'd; it lay along the deep,
Like a huge lion in the sun asleep, ²³⁵
While round it swarm'd the proas' flitting
chain,
Like summer bees that hum around his
mane.

XI

The white man landed! need the rest be
told?
The New World stretch'd its dusk hand to
the Old; ²³⁹
Each was to each a marvel, and the tie
Of wonder warm'd to better sympathy.
Kind was the welcome of the sun-born
sires,
And kinder still their daughters' gentler
fires.
Their union grew: the children of the storm
Found beauty link'd with many a dusky
form; ²⁴⁵
While these in turn admired the paler
glow,
Which seem'd so white in climes that knew
no snow.
The chase, the race, the liberty to roam,
The soil where every cottage show'd a
home;
The sea-spread net, the lightly launch'd
canoe, ²⁵⁰
Which stemm'd the studded archipelago,
O'er whose blue blossom rose the starry
isles;
The healthy slumber, earn'd by sportive
toils;
The palm, the loftiest dryad of the woods,
Within whose bosom infant Bacchus
broods, ²⁵⁵
While eagles scarce build higher than the
crest
Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her
breast;
The cava feast, the yam, the cocoa's root,
Which bears at once the cup, and milk,
and fruit;
The bread-tree, which, without the plough-
share, yields ²⁶⁰
The unreap'd harvest of unfurrow'd fields,
And bakes its unadulterated loaves
Without a furnace in unpurchased groves,
And flings off famine from its fertile breast,
A priceless market for the gathering
guest;— ²⁶⁵
These, with the luxuries of seas and woods,
The airy joys of social solitudes,
Tamed each rude wanderer to the sym-
pathies
Of those who were more happy, if less wise,

Did more than Europe's discipline had
done, ²⁷⁰
And civilised Civilisation's son!

XII

Of these, and there was many a willing pair,
Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:
Both children of the isles, though distant
far;
Both born beneath a sea-presiding star;
Both nourish'd amidst nature's native
scenes, ²⁷⁶
Loved to the last, whatever intervenes
Between us and our childhood's sympathy,
Which still reverts to what first caught the
eye.
He who first met the Highlands' swelling
blue ²⁸⁰
Will love each peak that shows a kindred
hue,
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountain in his mind's
embrace.
Long have I roamed through lands which
are not mine, ²⁸⁴
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling
thrall;
The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Loch-na-gar with Ida look'd o'er
Troy, ²⁹¹
Mix'd Celtic memories with the Phrygian
mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear
fount.
Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
Forgive me, Phœbus! that my fancy
stray'd; ²⁹⁵
The north and nature taught me to adore
Your scenes sublime, from those beloved
before.

The love which maketh all things fond and
fair,
The youth which makes one rainbow of
the air,
The dangers past, that make even man
enjoy ³⁰⁰
The pause in which he ceases to destroy,
The mutual beauty, which the sternest feel
Strike to their hearts like lightning to the
steel,
United the half savage and the whole,
The maid and boy in one absorbing soul.
No more the thundering memory of the
fight ³⁰⁶
Wrapp'd his wean'd bosom in its dark de-
light;
No more the irksome restlessness of rest
Disturb'd him like the eagle in her nest,

THE ISLAND

[CANTO II

Whose whetted beak and far-pervading
eye 310

Darts for a victim over all the sky:
His heart was tamed to that voluptuous
state,

At once Elysian and effeminate,
Which leaves no laurels o'er the hero's
urn;—

These wither when for aught save blood
they burn; 315

Yet when their ashes in their nook are laid,
Doth not the myrtle leave as sweet a shade?
Had Cæsar known but Cleopatra's kiss,
Rome had been free, the world had not
been his.

And what have Cæsar's deeds and Cæsar's
fame 320

Done for the earth? We feel them in our
shame:

The gory sanction of his glory stains
The rust which tyrants cherish on our
chains.

Though Glory, Nature, Reason, Freedom,
bid

Roused millions do what single Brutus
did— 325

Sweep these mere mock-birds of the des-
pot's song

From the tall bough where they have
perch'd so long,—

Still are we hawk'd at by such mousing
owls,

And take for falcons those ignoble fowls,
When but a word of freedom would dispel
These bugbears, as their terrors show too
well. 331

XIV

Rapt in the fond forgetfulness of life,
Neuha, the South Sea girl, was all a wife,
With no distracting world to call her off
From love; with no society to scoff 335
At the new transient flame; no babbling
crowd

Of coxcombs in admiration loud,
Or with adulterous whisper to alloy
Her duty, and her glory, and her joy: 339
With faith and feelings naked as her form,
She stood as stands a rainbow in a storm,
Changing its hues with bright variety,
But still expanding loverel o'er the sky,
Howe'er its arch may swell, its colours
move, 344

The cloud-compelling harbinger of love.

XV

Here, in this grotto of the wave-worn shore,
They pass'd the tropic's red meridian o'er;
Nor long the hours—they never paused
o'er time,
Unbroken by the clock's funereal chime,
Which deals the daily pittance of our span,
And points and mocks with iron laugh at
man. 351

What deem'd they of the future or the
past?

The present, like a tyrant, held them fast:
Their hour-glass was the sea-sand, and the
tide,

Like her smooth billow, saw their mo-
ments glide; 355

Their clock the sun, in his unbounded
tow'r;

They reckon'd not, whose day was but an
hour;

The nightingale, their only vesper-bell,
Sung sweetly to the rose the day's farewell;
The broad sun set, but not with lingering
sweep, 360

As in the north he mellow's o'er the deep;
But fiery, full, and fierce, as if he left
The world for ever, earth of light bereft,
Plunged with red forehead down along the
wave, 364

As dives a hero headlong to his grave.
Then rose they, looking first along the skies,
And then for light into each other's eyes,
Wondering that summer show'd so brief
a sun,
And asking if indeed the day were done.

XVI

And let not this seem strange: the devotee
Lives not in earth, but in his ecstasy;

Around him days and worlds are heedless
driven,

His soul is gone before his dust to heaven.
Is love less potent? No—his path is trod,
Alike uplifted gloriously to God; 375

Or link'd to all we know of heaven below,
The other better self, whose joy or woe
Is more than ours; the all-absorbing flame
Which, kindled by another, grows the
same,

Wrapt in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral
pile, 380

Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and
smile.

How often we forget all time, when lone,
Admiring Nature's universal throne,
Her woods, her wilds, her waters, the in-
tense

Reply of hers to our intelligence! 385
Live not the stars and mountains? Are the
waves

Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
Without a feeling in their silent tears?

No, no;—they woo and clasp us to their
spheres,

Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before
Its hour, and merge our soul in the great
shore. 391

Strip off this fond and false identity!—
Who thinks of self when gazing on the sky?
And who, though gazing lower, ever
thought,

In the young moments ere the heart is
taught 395

Time's lesson, of man's baseness or his
own?
All nature is his realm, and love his throne.

XVII

Neuha arose, and Torquil: twilight's hour
Came sad and softly to their rocky bower,
Which, kindling by degrees its dewy spars,
Echoed their dim light to the mustering
stars. 401
Slowly the pair, partaking nature's calm,
Sought out their cottage, built beneath the
palm;
Now smiling and now silent, as the scene;
Lovely as Love—the spirit!—when serene.
The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his
swell, 406
Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the
shell,
As, far divided from his parent deep,
The sea-born infant cries, and will not
sleep, 409
Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave
For the broad bosom of his nursing wave:
The woods droop'd darkly, as inclined to
rest,
The tropic bird wheel'd rockward to his
nest,
And the blue sky spread round them like a
lake
Of peace, where Piety her thirst might
slake. 415

XVIII

But through the palm and plantain, hark,
a voice!
Not such as would have been a lover's
choice,
In such an hour, to break the air so still;
No dying night-breeze, harping o'er the hill,
Striking the strings of nature, rock and
tree, 420
Those best and earliest lyres of harmony,
With Echo for their chorus; nor the alarm
Of the loud war-whoop to dispel the charm;
Nor the soliloquy of the hermit owl,
Exhaling all his solitary soul, 425
The dim though large-eyed winged an-
chorite,
Who peals his dreary pæan o'er the night;
But a loud, long, and naval whistle, shrill
As ever started through a sea-bird's bill;
And then a pause, and then a hoarse,
'Hillo! 430
Torquil, my boy! what cheer? Ho!
brother, ho!
'Who hails?' cried Torquil, following
with his eye
The sound. 'Here's one,' was all the brief
reply.

XIX

But here the herald of the self-same mouth
Came breathing o'er the aromatic south,

Not like a 'bed of violets' on the gale, 436
But such as wafts its cloud o'er grog or ale,
Borne from a short frail pipe, which yet
had blown
Its gentle odours over either zone,
And, puff'd where'er winds rise or waters
roll, 440
Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to
the Pole,
Opposed its vapour as the lightning flash'd,
And reek'd, 'midst mountain-billows, un-
abash'd,
To Æolus a constant sacrifice,
Through every change of all the varying
skies. 445
And what was he who bore it?—I may err,
But deem him sailor or philosopher.
Sublime tobacco! which from east to west
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's
rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his
brides; 451
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the
Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich,
and ripe; 455
Like other charmers, wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties—Give me a cigar!

XX

Through the approaching darkness of the
wood 460
A human figure broke the solitude,
Fantastically, it may be, array'd,
A seaman in a savage masquerade;
Such as appears to rise out from the deep
When o'er the line the merry vessels sweep,
And the rough saturnalia of the tar 466
Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrow'd
car;
And, pleased, the god of ocean sees his
name
Revive once more, though but in mimic
game
Of his true sons, who riot in the breeze
Undreamt of in his native Cyclades. 471
Still the old god delights, from out the
main,
To snatch some glimpses of his ancient
reign.
Our sailor's jacket, though in ragged trim,
His constant pipe, which never yet burn'd
dim, 475
His foremast air, and somewhat rolling gait,
Like his dear vessel, spoke his former
state;
But then a sort of kerchief round his head,
Not over-tightly bound, nor nicely
spread;

THE ISLAND

[CANTO II

And, 'stead of trowsers (ah! too early
corn! 480

For even the mildest woods will have their
thorn),

A curious sort of somewhat scanty mat
Now served for inexpressibles and hat;
His naked feet and neck, and sunburnt face,
Perchance might suit alike with either
race. 485

His arms were all his own, our Europe's
growth,

Which two worlds bless for civilising both;
The musket swung behind his shoulders
broad,

And somewhat stoop'd by his marine
abode,

But brawny as the boar's; and hung be-
neath, 490

His cutlass droop'd, unconscious of a
sheath,

Or lost or worn away; his pistols were
Link'd to his belt, a matrimonial pair—
(Let not this metaphor appear a scoff,
Though one miss'd fire, the other would go
off); 495

These, with a bayonet, not so free from
rust

As when the arm-chest held its brighter
trust,

Completed his accoutrements, as Night
Survey'd him in his garb heteroclit.

XXI

'What cheer, Ben Bunting?' cried (when
in full view 500

Our new acquaintance) Torquil. 'Aught
of new?

'Ey, ey!' quoth Ben, 'not new, but news
enow;

A strange sail in the offing.'—'Sail! and
how?

What! could you make her out? It cannot
be;

I've seen no rag of canvas on the sea.' 505
'Belike,' said Ben, 'you might not from the
bay,

But from the bluff-head, where I watch'd
to-day,

I saw her in the doldrums; for the wind
Was light and baffling.'—'When the sun
declined

Where lay she? had she anchor'd?'—'No,
but still 510

She bore down on us, till the wind grew still.'
'Her flag?'—'I had no glass: but fore and
aft,

Egad! she seem'd a wicked-looking craft.'
'Arm'd?'—'I expect so;—sent on the
look-out;

'Tis time, belike, to put our helm about.'
'About?—Whate'er may have us now in
chase, 516

We'll make no running fight, for that were
base;

We will die at our quarters, like true men.'
'Ey, ey! for that 'tis all the same to Ben.'

'Does Christian know this?'—'Ay; he
has piped all hands 520

To quarters. They are furnishing the stands
Of arms; and we have got some guns to
bear,

And scaled them. You are wanted.'—
'That's but fair;

And if it were not, mine is not the soul
To leave my comrades helpless on the
shoal. 525

My Neuha! ah! and must my fate pursue
Not me alone, but one so sweet and true?

But whatsoe'er betide, ah, Neuha! now
Unman me not; the hour will not allow

A tear; I'm thine whatever intervenes!
'Right,' quoth Ben; 'that will do for the
marines.' 531

CANTO THE THIRD

I

THE fight was o'er; the flashing through
the gloom,

Which robes the cannon as he wings a
tomb,

Had ceased; and sulphury vapours up-
ward driven

Had left the earth, and but polluted
heaven:

The rattling roar which rung in every
volley 5

Had left the echoes to their melancholy;
No more they shriek'd their horror, boom
for boom;

The strife was done, the vanquish'd had
their doom;

The mutineers were crush'd, dispers'd, or
ta'en,

Or lived to deem the happiest were the
slain. 10

Few, few escaped, and these were hunted
o'er

The isle they loved beyond their native
shore.

No further home was theirs, it seem'd, on
earth,

Once renegades to that which gave them
birth;

Track'd like wild beasts, like them they
sought the wild, 15

As to a mother's bosom flies the child;
But vainly wolves and lions seek their den,

And still more vainly men escape from
men.

II

Beneath a rock whose jutting base pro-
trudes

Far over ocean in its fiercest moods, 20
When scaling his enormous crag the wave

Is hurl'd down headlong like the foremost
brave,

And falls back on the foaming crowd
 behind,
 Which fight beneath the banners of the
 wind, 24
 But now at rest, a little remnant drew
 Together, bleeding, thirsty, faint, and few;
 But still their weapons in their hands, and
 still
 With something of the pride of former will,
 As men not all unused to meditate,
 And strive much more than wonder at
 their fate. 30
 Their present lot was what they had fore-
 seen,
 And dared as what was likely to have been;
 Yet still the lingering hope, which deem'd
 their lot
 Not pardon'd, but unsought for or forgot,
 Or trusted that, if sought, their distant
 caves 35
 Might still be miss'd amidst the world of
 waves,
 Had wean'd their thoughts in part from
 what they saw
 And felt, the vengeance of their country's
 law.
 Their sea-green isle, their guilt-won para-
 dise,
 No more could shield their virtue or their
 vice: 40
 Their better feelings, if such were, were
 thrown
 Back on themselves,—their sins remain'd
 alone.
 Proscribed even in their second country,
 they
 Were lost; in vain the world before them
 lay;
 All outlets seem'd secured. Their new
 allies 45
 Had fought and bled in mutual sacrifice;
 But what avail'd the club and spear, and
 arm
 Of Hercules, against the sulphury charm,
 The magic of the thunder, which destroy'd
 The warrior ere his strength could be em-
 ploy'd? 50
 Dug, like a spreading pestilence, the grave
 No less of human bravery than the brave!
 Their own scant numbers acted all the
 few
 Against the many oft will dare and do;
 But though the choice seems native to die
 free, 55
 Even Greece can boast but one Thermo-
 pylæ,
 Till now, when she has forged her broken
 chain
 Back to a sword, and dies and lives again!

III

Beside the jutting rock the few appear'd,
 Like the last remnant of the red-deer's
 herd; 60

Their eyes were feverish, and their aspect
 worn,
 But still the hunter's blood was on their
 horn,
 A little stream came tumbling from the
 height,
 And straggling into ocean as it might,
 Its bounding crystal frolick'd in the ray,
 And gush'd from cliff to crag with restless
 spray; 66
 Close on the wild, wide ocean, yet as pure
 And fresh as innocence, and more secure,
 Its silver torrent glitter'd o'er the deep,
 As the shy chamois' eye o'erlooks the
 steep, 70
 While far below the vast and sullen swell
 Of ocean's alpine azure rose and fell.
 To this young spring they rush'd,—all
 feelings first
 Absorb'd in passion's and in nature's
 thirst,—
 Drank as they do who drink their last, and
 threw 75
 Their arms aside to revel in its dew;
 Cool'd their scorch'd throats, and wash'd
 the gory stains
 From wounds whose only bandage might
 be chains;
 Then, when their drought was quench'd,
 look'd sadly round,
 As wondering how so many still were
 found 80
 Alive and fetterless:—but silent all,
 Each sought his fellow's eyes, as if to call
 On him for language which his lips denied,
 As though their voices with their cause had
 died.

IV

Stern, and aloof a little from the rest,
 Stood Christian, with his arms across his
 chest. 86
 The ruddy, reckless, dauntless hue once
 spread
 Along his cheek was livid now as lead;
 His light-brown locks, so graceful in their
 flow,
 Now rose like startled vipers o'er his
 brow. 90
 Still as a statue, with his lips com-
 pressed
 To stifle even the breath within his breast,
 Fast by the rock, all menacing, but mute,
 He stood; and, save a slight beat of his
 foot,
 Which deepen'd now and then the sandy
 dint 95
 Beneath his heel, his form seem'd turn'd
 to flint.
 Some paces further Torquil lean'd his head
 Against a bank, and spoke not, but he
 bled,—
 Not mortally:—his worst wound was
 within;
 His brow was pale, his blue eyes sunken in,

THE ISLAND

[CANTO III

And blood-drops, sprinkled o'er his yellow
hair,
Show'd that his faintness came not from
despair,
But nature's ebb. Beside him was another,
Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother,—
Ben Bunting, who essay'd to wash, and
wipe,
And bind his wound—then calmly lit his
pipe,
A trophy which survived a hundred fights,
A beacon which had cheer'd ten thousand
nights.
The fourth and last of this deserted group
Walk'd up and down—at times would
stand, then stoop,
To pick a pebble up—then let it drop—
Then hurry as in haste—then quickly
stop—
Then cast his eyes on his companions—
then
Half whistle half a tune, and pause again—
And then his former movements would
redouble,
With something between carelessness and
trouble.
This is a long description, but applies
To scarce five minutes pass'd before the
eyes;
But yet *what* minutes! Moments like to
these
Rend men's lives into immortalities. 120

V

At length Jack Skyscape, a mercurial
man,
Who flutter'd over all things like a fan,
More brave than firm, and more disposed
to dare
And die at once than wrestle with despair,
Exclaim'd, 'G—d damn!'—those syllables
intense,—
Nucleus of England's native eloquence,
As the Turk's 'Allah!' or the Roman's
more
Fagan 'Proh Jupiter!' was wont of yore
To give their first impressions such a vent,
By way of echo to embarrassment. 130
Jack was embarrass'd,—never hero more,
And as he knew not what to say, he swore:
Nor swore in vain; the long congenial
sound
Reviv'd Ben Bunting from his pipe pro-
found;
He drew it from his mouth, and look'd full
wise,
But merely added to the oath his eyes;
Thus rendering the imperfect phrase com-
plete,
A peroration I need not repeat.

But Christian, of a higher order, stood
Like an extinct volcano in his mood;

Silent, and sad, and savage,—with the
trace
Of passion reeking from his clouded face;
Till lifting up again his sombre eye,
It glanced on Torquil, who lean'd faintly
by.
'And is it thus?' he cried, 'unhappy boy!
And thee, too, *thee*—my madness must
destroy!'
He said, and strode to where young Tor-
quil stood,
Yet dabbled with his lately flowing blood;
Seized his hand wistfully, but did not press,
And shrunk as fearful of his own caress;
Inquired into his state; and when he heard
The wound was slighter than he deem'd or
fear'd,
A moment's brightness pass'd along his
brow,
As much as such a moment would allow.
'Yes,' he exclaim'd, 'we're taken in the
toil,
But not a coward or a common spoil;
Dearly they've bought us—dearly still may
buy,—
And I must fall; but have you strength to
fly?
'Twould be some comfort still, could you
survive;
Our dwindled band is now too few to
strive.
Oh! for a sole canoe! though but a shell,
To bear you hence to where a hope may
dwell!
For me, my lot is what I sought; to be,
In life or death, the fearless and the free.'

VII

Even as he spoke, around the promontory,
Which nodded o'er the billows high and
hoary,
A dark speck dotted ocean: on it flew
Like the shadow of a rcused sea-mew;
Onward it came—and, lo! a second
follow'd—
Now seen—now hid—where ocean's vale
was hollow'd;
And near, and nearer, till their dusky crew
Presented well-known aspects to the view,
Till on the surf their skimming paddles play,
Buoyant as wings, and fitting through the
spray;—
Now perching on the wave's high curl, and
now
Dash'd downward in the thundering foam
below,
Which flings it broad and boiling sheet on
sheet,
And slings its high flakes, shiver'd into
sleet:
But floating still through surf and swell,
drew nigh
The barks, like small birds through a
lowering sky.

Their art seem'd nature—such the skill to sweep
The wave of these born playmates of the deep.

VIII

And who the first that, springing on the strand,
Leap'd like a nereid from her shell to land,
With dark but brilliant skin, and dewy eye
Shining with love, and hope, and constancy?
Neuha—the fond, the faithful, the adored—
Her heart on Torquil's like a torrent pour'd;
And smiled, and wept, and near, and nearer clasp'd,
As if to be assured 'twas *him* she grasp'd;
Shudder'd to see his yet warm wound, and then,
To find it trivial, smiled and wept again.
She was a warrior's daughter, and could bear
Such sights, and feel, and mourn, but not despair.
Her lover lived,—nor foes nor fears could blight
That full-blown moment in its all delight:
Joy trickled in her tears, joy fill'd the sob
That rock'd her heart till almost heard to throb;
And paradise was breathing in the sigh
Of nature's child in nature's ecstasy. 200

IX

The sterner spirits who beheld that meeting
Were not unmoved; who are, when hearts are greeting?
Even Christian gazed upon the maid and boy
With tearless eye, but yet a gloomy joy
Mix'd with those bitter thoughts the soul arrays
In hopeless visions of our better days,
When all's gone—to the rainbow's latest ray.
'And but for me!' he said, and turn'd away;
Then gazed upon the pair, as in his den
A lion looks upon his cubs again;
And then relapsed into his sullen guise,
As heedless of his further destinies.

X

But brief their time for good or evil thought;
The billows round the promontory brought
The plash of hostile oars.—Alas! who made
That sound a dread? All around them seem'd array'd

Against them, save the bride of Toobonai:
She, as she caught the first glimpse o'er the bay
Of the arm'd boats, which hurried to complete
The remnant's ruin with their flying feet,
Beckon'd the natives round her to their prow,
Embark'd their guests and launch'd their light canoes,
In one placed Christian and his comrades twain;
But she and Torquil must not part again.
She fix'd him in her own.—Away! away!
They clear the breakers, dart along the bay,
And towards a group of islets, such as bear
The sea-bird's nest and seal's surf-hollow'd lair,
They skim the blue tops of the billows; fast
They flew, and fast their fierce pursuers chased.
They gain upon them—now they lose again,—
Again make way and menace o'er the main;
And now the two canoes in chase divide,
And follow different courses o'er the tide,
To baffle the pursuit.—Away! away!
As Life is on each paddle's flight to-day,
And more than Life or lives to Neuha: Love
Freights the frail bark and urges to the cove;
And now the refuge and the foe are nigh—
Yet, yet a moment: Fly, thou light ark,
fly!

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

WHITE as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon's clouded and half free,
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky,
Is hope's last gleam in man's extremity.
Her anchor parts! but still her snowy sail
Attracts our eye amidst the rudest gale:
Though every wave she climbs divides us more,
The heart still follows from the loneliest shore.

II

Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o'er the spray,
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the wind,
And sleeps unwieldy in his cavern dun,
Or gambols with huge frolic in the sun:
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard
The startled echo of the ocean bird, 16

THE ISLAND

[CANTO IV

Who rears on its bare breast her callow brood,

The feather'd fishers of the solitude.

A narrow segment of the yellow sand

On one side forms the outline of a strand;

Here the young turtle, crawling from his shell,

Steals to the deep wherein his parents dwell;

Chipp'd by the beam, a nursling of the day,

But hatch'd for ocean by the fostering ray;

The rest was one bleak precipice, as e'er

Gave mariners a shelter and despair;

A spot to make the saved regret the deck

Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck.

Such was the stern asylum Neuha chose
To shield her lover from his following foes;

But all its secret was not told; she knew

In this a treasure hidden from the view.

III

Ere the canoes divided, near the spot,
The men that mann'd what held her Tor-

quill's lot,

By her command removed, to strengthen more

The skiff which wafted Christian from the shore.

This he would have opposed; but with a smile

She pointed calmly to the craggy isle,
And bade him 'speed and prosper.' She

would take

The rest upon herself for Torquill's sake.

They parted with this added aid; afar

The proa darted like a shooting star,

And gain'd on the pursuers, who now

steer'd

Right on the rock which she and Torquill

near'd.

They pull'd; her arm, though delicate, was

free

And firm as ever grappled with the sea,

And yielded scarce to Torquill's manlier

strength.

The prow now almost lay within its length

Of the crag's steep, inexorable face,

With nought but soundless waters for its

Within a hundred boats' length was the foe,

And now what refuge but their frail canoe?

This Torquill ask'd with half-upbraiding

eye,

Which said—'Has Neuha brought me

here to die?

Is this a place of safety, or a grave,

And yon huge rock the tombstone of the

wave?'

IV

They rested on their paddles, and uprose

Neuha, and pointing to the approaching

foe,

Cried, 'Torquill, follow me, and fearless follow!'

Then plunged at once into the ocean's hollow.

There was no time to pause—the foes were near—

Chains in his eye, and menace in his ear;

With vigour they pull'd on, and as they came,

Hail'd him to yield, and by his forfeit name.

Headlong he leapt—to him the swimmer's skill

Was native, and now all his hope from ill:

But how, or where? He dived, and rose no

more;

The boat's crew look'd amazed o'er sea

and shore.

There was no landing on that precipice,

Steep, harsh, and slippery as a berg of ice.

They watch'd awhile to see him float again,

But not a trace rebubbled from the main:

The wave roll'd on, no ripple on its face,

Since their first plunge recall'd a single

trace;

The little whirl which eddied, and slight

foam,

That whiten'd o'er what seem'd their latest

home,

White as a sepulchre above the pair

Who left no marble (mournful as an heir)

The quiet proa wavering o'er the tide

Was all that told of Torquill and his bride;

And but for this alone the whole might

seem

The vanish'd phantom of a seaman's dream.

They paused and search'd in vain, then

pull'd away;

Even superstition now forbade their stay.

Some said he had not plunged into the

wave,

But vanish'd like a corpse-light from a

grave;

Others, that something supernatural

Glared in his figure, more than mortal tall;

While all agreed that in his cheek and eye

There was a dead hue of eternity.

Still as their oars receded from the crag,

Round every weed a moment would they

lag,

Expectant of some token of their prey;

But no—he had melted from them like the

spray.

V

And where was he the pilgrim of the deep,

Following the nereid? Had they ceased to

weep

For ever? or, received in coral caves,

Wrung life and pity from the softening

waves?

Did they with ocean's hidden sovereigns

dwell,

And sound with mermen the fantastic

shell?

Did Neuha with the mermaids comb her hair
Flowing o'er ocean as it stream'd in air?
Or had they perish'd, and in silence slept
Beneath the gulf wherein they boldly leapt?

VI

Young Neuha plunged into the deep, and
he 105
Follow'd; her track beneath her native sea
Was as a native's of the element,
So smoothly, bravely, brilliantly she went,
Leaving a streak of light behind her heel,
Which struck and flash'd like an am-
phibious steel. 110

Closely, and scarcely less expert to trace
The depths where divers hold the pearl in
chase,

Torquil, the nursling of the northern seas,
Pursued her liquid steps with heart and
ease.

Deep—deeper for an instant Neuha led
The way—then upward soar'd—and as
she spread 116

Her arms, and flung the foam from off her
locks,

Laugh'd, and the sound was answer'd by
the rocks.

They had gain'd a central realm of earth
again,

But look'd for tree, and field, and sky, in
vain. 120

Around she pointed to a spacious cave,
Whose only portal was the keyless wave,
(A hollow archway by the sun unseen,
Save through the billows' glassy veil of green,
In some transparent ocean holiday, 125
When all the finny people are at play.)

Wiped with her hair the brine from Tor-
quil's eyes,

And clapp'd her hands with joy at his sur-
prise; 128

Led him to where the rock appear'd to jut,
And form a something like a Triton's hut;
For all was darkness for a space, till day
Through clefts above let in a sober'd ray;
As in some old cathedral's glimmering
aisle

The dusty monuments from light recoil,
Thus sadly in their refuge submarine 135
The vault drew half her shadow from the
scene.

VII

Forth from her bosom the young savage
drew 137

A pine torch, strongly girded with gnatoos;
A plantain-leaf o'er all, the more to keep
Its latent sparkle from the sapping deep.
This mantle kept it dry; then from a nook
Of the same plantain-leaf a flint she took,
A few shrunk wither'd twigs, and from the
blade 143

Of Torquil's knife struck fire, and thus
array'd

The grot with torchlight. Wide it was and
high, 145

And show'd a self-born Gothic canopy;
The arch uprear'd by nature's architect,
The architrave some earthquake might
erect;

The buttress from some mountain's
bosom hurl'd,

When the Poles crash'd, and water was the
world; 150

Or harden'd from some earth-absorbing
fire,

While yet the globe reek'd from its funeral
pyre;

The fretted pinnacle, the aisle, the nave,
Were there, all scoop'd by Darkness from
her cave. 154

There, with a little tinge of phantasy,
Fantastic faces mop'd and mow'd on high,

And then a mitre or a shrine would fix
The eye upon its seeming crucifix.

Thus Nature play'd with the stalactites,
And built herself a chapel of the seas.

VIII

And Neuha took her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vault her kindled
brand,

And led him into each recess, and show'd
The secret places of their new abode.

Nor these alone, for all had been prepared
Before, to soothe the lover's lot she
shared: 166

The mat for rest; for dress the fresh gnatoos,
And sandal oil to fence against the dew;

For food the cocoa-nut, the yam, the
bread

Born of the fruit; for board the plantain
spread 170

With its broad leaf, or turtle-shell which
bore

A banquet in the flesh it cover'd o'er;
The gourd with water recent from the rill,

The ripe banana from the mellow hill;
A pine-torch pile to keep undying light,

And she herself, as beautiful as night,
To fling her shadowy spirit o'er the scene,

And make their subterranean world serene.
She had foreseen, since first the stranger's
sail

Drew to their isle, that force or flight might
fail, 180

And form'd a refuge of the rocky den
For Torquil's safety from his countrymen.

Each dawn had wafted there her light
canoe,

Laden with all the golden fruits that grew;
Each eve had seen her gliding through the
hour 185

With all could cheer or deck their sparry
bower;

And now she spread her little store with
smiles,

The happiest daughter of the loving isles.

IX

She, as he gazed with grateful wonder,
 Her ^{press'd} shelter'd love to her impassion'd
 breast; ¹⁹⁰
 And suited to her soft caresses, told
 An olden tale of love,—for love is old,
 Old as eternity, but not outworn
 With each new being born or to be born:
 How a young chief, a thousand moons
 ago, ¹⁹⁵
 Diving for turtle in the depths below,
 Had risen, in tracking fast his ocean prey,
 Into the cave which round and o'er them
 lay;
 How in some desperate feud of after-time
 He shelter'd there a daughter of the clime,
 A foe beloved, and offspring of a foe, ²⁰¹
 Saved by his tribe but for a captive's woe;
 How, when the storm of war was still'd, he led
 His island clan to where the waters spread
 Their deep-green shadow o'er the rocky
 door, ²⁰⁵
 Then dived—it seem'd as if to rise no more:
 His wondering mates, amazed within their
 bark,
 Or deem'd him mad, or prey to the blue
 shark;
 Row'd round in sorrow the sea-girded
 rock,
 Then paused upon their paddles from the
 shock; ²¹⁰
 When, fresh and springing from the deep,
 they saw
 A goddess rise—so deem'd they in their
 awe;
 And their companion, glorious by her side,
 Proud and exulting in his mermaid bride:
 And how, when undeceived, the pair they
 bore ²¹⁵
 With sounding conchs and joyous shouts
 to shore;
 How they had gladly lived and calmly
 died,
 And why not also Torquil and his bride?
 Not mine to tell the rapturous caress ²¹⁹
 Which follow'd wildly in that wild recess
 This tale; enough that all within that cave
 Was love, though buried strong as in the
 grave
 Where Abelard, through twenty years of
 death,
 When Eloisa's form was lower'd beneath
 Their nuptial vault, his arms outstretch'd,
 and press'd ²²⁵
 The kindling ashes to his kindled breast.
 The waves without sang round their
 couch, their roar
 As much unheeded as if life were o'er:
 Within, their hearts made all their har-
 mony,
 Love's broken murmur and more broken
 sigh. ²³⁰

X

And they, the cause and sharers of the
 shock
 Which left them exiles of the hollow rock,
 Where were they? O'er the sea for life
 they plied,
 To seek from Heaven the shelter men
 denied.
 Another course had been their choice—
 but where? ²³⁵
 The wave which bore them still their foes
 would bear,
 Who, disappointed of their former chase,
 In search of Christian now renew'd their
 race.
 Eager with anger, their strong arms made
 way,
 Like vultures baffled of their previous
 prey. ²⁴⁰
 They gain'd upon them, all whose safety
 lay
 In some bleak crag or deeply-hidden bay:
 No further chance or choice remain'd;
 and right
 For the first further rock which met their
 sight
 They steer'd, to take their latest view of
 land. ²⁴⁵
 And yield as victims, or die sword in hand;
 Dismiss'd the natives and their shallow,
 who
 Would still have battled for that scanty
 crew;
 But Christian bade them seek their shore
 again,
 Nor add a sacrifice which were in vain;
 For what were simple bow and savage
 spear ²⁵¹
 Against the arms which must be wielded
 here?

XI

They landed on a wild but narrow scene,
 Where few but Nature's footsteps yet had
 been;
 Prepared their arms, and with that gloomy
 eye, ²⁵⁵
 Stern and sustain'd, of man's extremity,
 When hope is gone, nor glory's self remains
 To cheer resistance against death or
 chains,—
 They stood, the three, as the three hundred
 stood
 Who dyed Thermopylæ with holy blood.
 But, ah! how different! 'tis the cause makes
 all, ²⁶¹
 Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.
 O'er them no fame, eternal and intense,
 Blazed through the clouds of death and
 beckon'd hence;
 No grateful country, smiling through her
 tears, ²⁶⁵
 Begun the praises of a thousand years;

No nation's eyes would on their tomb be bent,
 No heroes envy them their monument;
 However boldly their warm blood was spilt,
 Their life was shame, their epitaph was guilt.
 And this they knew and felt, at least the one,
 The leader of the band he had undone;
 Who, born perchance for better things, had set
 His life upon a cast which linger'd yet:
 But now the die was to be thrown, and all
 The chances were in favour of his fall:
 And such a fall! But still he faced the shock,
 Obdurate as a portion of the rock
 Whereon he stood, and fix'd his levell'd gun,
 Dark as a sullen cloud before the sun.

XII

The boat drew nigh, well arm'd, and firm the crew
 To act whatever duty bade them do;
 Careless of danger, as the onward wind
 Is of the leaves it strews, nor looks behind.
 And yet perhaps they rather wish'd to go
 Against a nation's than a native foe,
 And felt that this poor victim of self-will,
 Briton no more, had once been Britain's still.
 They hail'd him to surrender—no reply;
 Their arms were poised, and glitter'd in the sky.
 They hail'd again—no answer; yet once more
 They offer'd quarter louder than before.
 The echoes only, from the rock's rebound,
 Took their last farewell of the dying sound.
 Then flash'd the flint, and blazed the volleying flame,
 And the smoke rose between them and their aim,
 While the rock rattled with the bullets' knell,
 Which peal'd in vain, and flatten'd as they fell;
 Then flew the only answer to be given
 By those who had lost all hope in earth or heaven.
 After the first fierce peal, as they pull'd nigher,
 They heard the voice of Christian shout,
 'Now, fire!'
 And ere the word upon the echo died,
 Two fell; the rest assail'd the rock's rough side,
 And, furious at the madness of their foes,
 Disdain'd all further efforts, save to close.
 But steep the crag, and all without a path,
 Each step opposed a bastion to their wrath,

While, placed 'midst clefts the least accessible,
 Which Christian's eye was train'd to mark full well,
 The three maintain'd a strife which must not yield,
 In spots where eagles might have chosen to build.
 Their every shot told; while the assailant fell,
 Dash'd on the shingles like the limpet shell;
 But still enough survived, and mounted still,
 Scattering their numbers here and there, until
 Surrounded and commanded, though not
 Enough for seizure, near enough to die,
 The desperate trio held aloof their fate
 But by a thread, like sharks who've gorged the bait;
 Yet to the very last they battled well,
 And not a groan inform'd their foes who fell.
 Christian died last—twice wounded; and once more
 Mercy was offer'd when they saw his gore;
 Too late for life, but not too late to die,
 With, though a hostile hand, to close his eye.
 A limb was broken, and he droop'd along
 The crag, as doth a falcon rest of young.
 The sound revived him, or appear'd to wake
 Some passion which a weakly gesture spake:
 He beckon'd to the foremost, who drew nigh,
 But, as they near'd, he rear'd his weapon high—
 His last ball had been aim'd, but from his breast
 He tore the topmost button from his vest,
 Down the tube dash'd it, levell'd, fired, and smiled
 As his foe fell; then, like a serpent, coil'd
 His wounded, weary form, to where the steep
 Look'd desperate as himself along the deep;
 Cast one glance back, and clench'd his hand, and shook
 His last rage 'gainst the earth which he forsook;
 Then plunged: the rock below received like glass
 His body crush'd into one gory mass,
 With scarce a shred to tell of human form,
 Or fragment for the sea-bird or the worm;
 A fair-hair'd scalp, besmear'd with blood and weeds,
 Yet reek'd, the remnant of himself and deeds;

THE ISLAND

[CANTO IV

Some splinters of his weapons (to the last,
As long as hand could hold, he held them
fast)
Yet glitter'd, but at distance—hur!d away
To rust beneath the dew and dashing
spray. 350
The rest was nothing—save a life mis-
spent,
And soul—but who shall answer where it
went?
'Tis ours to bear, not judge the dead; and
they
Who doom to hell, themselves are on the
way,
Unless these bullies of eternal pains 355
Are pardon'd their bad hearts for their
worse brains.

XIII

The deed was over! All were gone or ta'en,
The fugitive, the captive, or the slain.
Chain'd on the deck, where once, a gallant
crew,
They stood with honour, were the
wretched few 360
Survivors of the skirmish on the isle;
But the last rock left no surviving spoil.
Cold lay they where they fell, and welter-
ing,
While o'er them flapp'd the sea-birds'
dewy wing,
Now wheeling nearer from the neighbour-
ing surge, 365
And screaming high their harsh and
hungry dirge:
But calm and careless heaved the wave
below,
Eternal with unsympathetic flow;
Far o'er its face the dolphins sported on,
And sprung the flying fish against the sun,
Till its dried wing relapsed from its brief
height, 371
To gather moisture for another flight.

XIV

'Twas morn; and Neuha, who by dawn of
day
Swam smoothly forth to catch the rising
ray,
And watch if aught approach'd the am-
phibious lair 375
Where lay her lover, saw a sail in air:
It flapp'd, it fill'd, and to the growing gale
Bent its broad arch: her breath began to
fail
With fluttering fear, her heart beat thick
and high,
While yet a doubt sprung where its course
might lie. 380

But no! it came not; fast and far away
The shadow lessen'd as it clear'd the bay.
She gazed, and flung the sea-foam from
her eyes, 383
To watch as for a rainbow in the skies.
On the horizon verged the distant deck,
Diminish'd, dwindled to a very speck—
Then vanish'd. All was ocean, all was joy!
Down plunged she through the cave to
rouse her boy; 388
Told all she had seen, and all she hoped,
and all
That happy love could augur or recall;
Sprung forth again, with Torquil follow-
ing free 391
His bounding nereid over the broad sea;
Swam round the rock, to where a shallow
cleft
Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
Drifting along the tide, without an oar,
That eve the strangers chased them from
the shore; 396
But when these vanish'd, she pursued her
prow,
Regain'd, and urged to where they found
it now:
Nor ever did more love and joy embark,
Than now were wafted in that slender
ark. 400

XV

Again their own shore rises on the view,
No more polluted with a hostile hue;
No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,
A floating dungeon:—all was hope and
home!
A thousand proas darted o'er the bay,
With sounding shells, and heralded their
way; 406
The chiefs came down, around the people
pour'd,
And welcomed Torquil as a son restored;
The women throng'd, embri'ing and em-
braced
By Neuha, asking where they had been
chased, 410
And how escaped? The tale was told; and
then
One acclamation rent the sky again;
And from that hour a new tradition gave
Their sanctuary the name of 'Neuha's
Cave.'
A hundred fires, far flickering from the
height, 415
Blazed o'er the general revel of the night,
The feast in honour of the guest, return'd
To peace and pleasure, perilously earn'd;
A night succeeded by such happy days
As only the yet infant world displays.

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

ADVERTISEMENT

At Ferrara, in the Library, are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's *Gierusalemme* and of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto, and the inkstand and chair, the tomb and the house, of the latter. But, as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto—at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed and depopulated: the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

I

LONG years!—It tries the thrilling frame
to bear

And eagle-spirit of a child of Song—
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude, 4
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorred grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous
shade,

Works through the throbbing eyeball to
the brain, 9

With a hot sense of heaviness and pain;
And bare, at once, Captivity display'd
Stands scoffing through the never-open'd
gate,

Which nothing through its bars admits,
save day,

And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone; 15

And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and—it may be—my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may
wear,

But must be borne. I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony, 21
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revell'd among men and things
divine, 25

And pour'd my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for Him,
The God who was on earth and is in
heaven,

For he has strengthen'd me in heart and
limb.

That through this sufferance I might be
forgiven, 30

I have employ'd my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won, and how
adored.

II

But this is o'er—my pleasant task is
done:—

My long-sustaining friend of many years!

If I do blot thy final page with tears, 35
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from
me none.

But thou, my young creation! my soul's
child!

Which ever playing round me came and
smiled,

And woo'd me from myself with thy sweet
sight, 39

Thou too art gone—and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed

With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended—what is left me now?

For I have anguish yet to bear—and how?
I know not that—but in the innate force

Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse, 47

Nor cause for such: they call'd me mad—
and why?

Oh Leonora! wilt not *thou* reply?
I was indeed delirious in my heart 50

To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind:

I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.

That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from

mankind; 56

But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still;

Successful love may sate itself away;
The wretched are the faithful; 'tis their
fate 60

To have all feeling, save the one, decay,
And every passion into one dilate,

As rapid rivers into ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III

Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity. 66

And hark! the lash and the increasing
howl,

And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy

foul,
Some who do still goad on the o'er-
labour'd mind, 70

And dim the little light that's left behind

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill:
With these and with their victims am I
class'd,

'Mid sounds and sights like these long
years have pass'd;

'Mid sights and sounds like these my life
may close:

So let it be—for then I shall repose.

IV

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives—Oh! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot!

Feel I not wroth with those who bade me
dwell

In this vast lazar-house of many woes?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought
the mind,

Nor words a language, nor ev'n men man-
kind;

Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to
blows,

And each is tortured in his separate hell—
For we are crowded in our solitudes—

Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling
moods;

While all can hear, none heed his neigh-
bour's call—

None! save that One, the veriest wretch of
all,

Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Dis-

Feel I not wroth with those who placed me
here?

Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,

Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun
and fear?

Would I not pay them back these pangs
again,

And teach them inward Sorrow's stifled
groan?

The struggle to be calm, and cold distress,
Which undermines our Stoical success?

No! still too proud to be vindictive—I
Have pardon'd princes' insults, and would
die.

Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,

It hath no business where *thou* art a guest:
Thy brother hates—but I cannot detest;

Thou pitiest not—but I cannot forsake.

V

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquench'd is still my better part,

Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart,
As dwells the gather'd lightning in its
cloud,

Encompass'd with its dark and rolling
shroud,

Till struck,—forth flies the all-ethereal
dart!

And thus at the collision of thy name,
The vivid thought still flashes through my
frame,

And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me; they are gone—I am the same.

And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A Princess was no love-mate for a bard;

I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;

And if my eyes reveal'd it, they, alas!
Were punish'd by the silentness of thine,

And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,

Worshipp'd at holy distance, and around
Hallow'd and meekly kiss'd the saintly
ground;

Not for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Had robed thee with a glory, and array'd
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismay'd—

Oh! not dismay'd—but awed, like One
above!

And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did sur-
pass;

I know not how—thy genius master'd
mine;

My star stood still before thee: if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without de-
sign,

That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell, which wrongs me—but for
thee.

The very love which lock'd me to my chain
Hath lighten'd half its weight; and for the
rest,

Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI

It is no marvel—from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did
pervade

And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth:
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,

And rocks, whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dreamed uncounted
hours,

Though I was chid for wandering; and the
wise

Shook their white aged heads o'er me and
said,

Of such materials wretched men were
made,

And such a truant boy would end in woe,
And that the only lesson was a blow;

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

And then they smote me, and I did not
weep,

But cursed them in my heart, and to my
haunt

Return'd and wept alone, and dream'd
again 164

The visions which arise without a sleep,
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft
pain;

And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought—and that was
thee; 170

And then I lost my being, all to be
Absorb'd in thine; the world was past
away;

Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII

I loved all Solitude, but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence,
save 176

The maniac and his tyrant; had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave.
But who hath seen me writhe, or heard me
rave? 180

Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wreck'd sailor on his desert shore;
The world is all before him—*mine is here*,
Scarce twice the space they must accord
my bier. 184

What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye,
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky;
I will not raise my own in such reproof.
Although 'tis clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay: I see 190
Unwonted lights along my prison shine
And a strange demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains below
The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffer'd
so, 195

Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that may be borne, or can debase.
I thought mine enemies had been but Man,
But Spirits may be leagued with them; all
Earth

Abandons, Heaven forgets me: in the
dearth 200

Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
It may be, tempt me further,—and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved,
Like steel in tempering fire? because I
loved? 205

Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal, and than
me.

IX

I once was quick in feeling—that is o'er;
My scars are callous, or I should have
dash'd

My brain against these bars, as the sun
flash'd 210

In mockery through them: If I bear and
bore

The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words,—'tis that I would
not die

And sanction with self-slaughter the dull
lie

Which snared me here, and with the brand
of shame 215

Stamp Madness deep into my memory,
And woo Compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes pro-
claim.

No—it shall be immortal! and I make
A future temple of my present cell, 220
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall
down,

And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearth-
less halls,

A poet's wreath shall be thine only
crown,— 225

A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy un-
peopled walls!

And thou, Leonora! thou—who wert
ashamed

That such as I could love—who blush'd to
hear

To less than monarchs that thou couldst
be dear, 230

Go! tell thy brother, that my heart, un-
tamed

By grief, years, weariness,—and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me—
from long infection of a *genie* like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the
abyss,— 235

Adores thee still; and add—that when the
towers

And battlements which guard his joyous
hours

Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,—

This, this, shall be a consecrated spot!
But *Thou*—when all that Birth and Beauty
throws 241

Of magic round thee is extinct—shalt have
One half the laurel which o'er shades my
grave.

No power in death can tear our names
apart,

As none in life could rend thee from my
heart. 245

Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever—but too late!

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

"Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before."
CAMPBELL.

DEDICATION

LADY! if for the cold and cloudy clime,
Where I was born, but where I would not die,
Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy
I dare to build the imitative rhyme,
Harsh Runic copy of the South's sublime,
THOU art the cause; and howsoever I
Fall short of his immortal harmony,
Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.
Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,
Spakest; and for thee to speak and be obey'd
Are one; but only in the sunny South
Such sounds are uttered, and such charms display'd,
So sweet a language from so fair a mouth—
Ah! to what effort would it not persuade?

RAVENNA, June 21, 1819.

PREFACE

IN the course of a visit to the city of Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he should do the same on Dante's exile,—the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city, both to the native and to the stranger.

'On this hint I spake,' and the result has been the following four cantos, in terza rima, now offered to the reader. If they are understood and approved, it is my purpose to continue the poem, in various other cantos, to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the Divina Commedia and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan I have had in my mind the Cassandra of Lycophron, and the Prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the Prophecies of Holy Writ. The measure adopted is the terza rima of Dante, which I am not aware to have seen hitherto tried in our language, except it may be by Mr. Hayley, of whose translation I never saw but one extract, quoted in the notes to Caliph Vathek; so that—if I do not err—this poem may be considered as a metrical experiment. The cantos are short, and about the same length of those of the poet, whose name I have borrowed, and most probably taken in vain.

Amongst the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of 'Childe Harold' translated into Italian versi sciolti,—that is, a poem written in the *Spenserean stanza* into *blank verse*, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza or of the sense. If the present poem, being on a national topic, should chance to undergo the same fate, I would request the Italian reader to remember that when I have failed in the imitation of his great 'Padre Alighier,' I have failed in imitating that which all study and few understand, since to this very day it is not yet settled what was the meaning of the allegory in the first canto of the Inferno, unless Count Marchetti's ingenious and probable conjecture may be considered as having decided the question.

He may also pardon my failure the more, as I am not quite sure that he would be pleased with my success, since the Italians, with a pardonable nationality, are particularly jealous of all that is left them as a nation,—their literature; and in the present bitterness of the classic and romantic war, are but ill disposed to permit a foreigner even to approve or imitate them, without finding some fault with his ultramontane presumption. I can easily enter into all this, knowing what would be thought in England of an Italian imitator of Milton, or if a translation of Monti, or Pindemonte, or Arici, should be held up to the rising generation as a model for their future poetical essays. But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

CANTO THE FIRST

ONCE more in man's frail world! which I
had left
So long that 'twas forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again,—too soon
bereft
Of the immortal vision which could heal

My earthly sorrows, and to God's own
skies
Lift me from that deep gulf without re-
peal,
Where late my ears rung with the damned
cries
Of souls in hopeless bale; and from that
place

Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the angelic race;
Midst whom my own bright Beatrice
bless'd 11

My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the eternal Triad! first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great
God!

Soul universal! led the mortal guest, 15
Unblasted by the glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty
throne.

Oh Beatrice! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath press'd, and the cold
marble stone,

Thou sole pure seraph of my earliest
love, 20

Love so ineffable, and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my
bosom move,
And meeting thee in heaven was but to
meet

That without which my soul, like the
arkless dove,
Had wander'd still in search of, nor her
feet 25

Relieved her wing till found: without
thy light

My paradise had still been incomplete.
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my
sight

Thou wert my life, the essence of my
thought,

Loved ere I knew the name of love, and
bright 30

Still in these dim old eyes, now over-
wrought

With the world's war, and years, and
banishment,

And tears for thee, by other woes un-
taught;

For mine is not a nature to be bent
By tyrannous faction, and the brawling
crowd, 35

And though the long, long conflict hath
been spent

In vain,—and never more, save when the
cloud

Which overhangs the Apennine my
mind's eye

Pierces to fancy Florence, once so proud
Of me, can I return, though but to die,

Unto my native soil,—they have not yet
Quench'd the old exile's spirit, stern and
high.

But the sun, though not overcast, must set,
And the night cometh; I am old in days,
And deeds, and contemplation, and
have met 45

Destruction face to face in all his ways.
The world hath left me, what it found
me, pure,

And if I have not gather'd yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure;

Man wrongs, and Time avenges, and
my name 50

May form a monument not all obscure,
Though such was not my ambition's end
or aim,

To add to the vain-glorious list of those
Who dabble in the pettiness of fame,

And make men's fickle breath the wind
that blows 55

Their sail, and deem it glory to be class'd
With conquerors, and virtue's other
foes,

In bloody chronicles of ages past. 60
I would have had my Florence great and
free;

Oh Florence! Florence! unto me thou
wast 65

Like that Jerusalem which the Almighty
He

Wept over, 'but thou wouldst not'; as
the bird

Gathers its young, I would have
gather'd thee

Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and
fierce, 65

Against the breast that cherish'd thee
was stirr'd

Thy venom, and my state thou didst
amerce,

And doom this body forfeit to the fire.
Alas! how bitter is his country's curse

To him who *for* that country would expire,
But did not merit to expire *by* her, 70

And loves her, loves her even in her ire!
The day may come when she will cease to
err,

The day may come she would be proud
to have

The dust she dooms to scatter, and
transfer 75

Of him, whom she denied a home, the
grave.

But this shall not be granted; let my
dust

Lie where it falls, nor shall the soil which
gave

Me breath, but in her sudden fury thrust
Me forth to breathe elsewhere, so re-
assume 80

My indignant bones, because her angry
gust

Forsooth is over, and repeal'd her doom;
No,—she denied me what was mine—
my roof,

And shall not have what is not hers—
my tomb.

Too long her armed wrath hath kept aloof
The breast which would have bled for
her, the heart 85

That beat, the mind that was temptation
proof,

The man who fought, toil'd, travell'd, and
each part

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

[CANTO I

Of a true citizen fulfill'd, and saw
 For his reward the Guelph's ascendant
 art 90
 Pass his destruction even into a law.
 These things are not made for forget-
 fulness,
 Florence shall be forgotten first; too
 raw
 The wound, too deep the wrong, and the
 distress
 Of such endurance too prolong'd to
 make 95
 My pardon greater, her injustice less,
 Though late repented; yet—yet for her
 sake
 I feel some fonder yearnings, and for
 thine,
 My own Beatrice, I would hardly take
 Vengeance upon the land which once was
 mine, 100
 And still is hallow'd by thy dust's return,
 Which would protect the murderess like
 a shrine,
 And save ten thousand foes by thy sole
 urn.
 Though, like old Marius from Min-
 turnæ's marsh
 And Carthage ruins, my lone breast
 may burn 105
 At times with evil feelings hot and harsh,
 And sometimes the last pangs of a vile
 foe
 Writhe in a dream before me, and
 o'erarch
 My brow with hopes of triumph,—let
 them go!
 Such are the last infirmities of those
 Who long have suffer'd more than
 mortal woe, 111
 And yet being mortal still have no repose
 But on the pillow of Revenge—Revenge,
 Who sleeps to dream of blood, and
 waking glows
 With the oft-baffled slakeless thirst of
 change, 115
 When we shall mount again, and they
 that trod
 Be trampled on, while Death and Atë
 range
 O'er humbled heads and sever'd necks—
 Great God!
 Take these thoughts from me—to thy
 hands I yield
 My many wrongs, and thine Almighty
 rod 120
 Will fall on those who smote me,—be my
 shield!
 As thou hast been in peril, and in pain,
 In turbulent cities, and the tented field—
 In toil, and many troubles borne in vain
 For Florence,—I appeal from her to
 Thee! 125
 Thee whom I late saw in thy loftiest
 reign,

Even in that glorious vision, which to see
 And live was never granted until now,
 And yet thou hast permitted this to me.
 Alas! with what a weight upon my brow
 The sense of earth and earthly things
 come back, 131
 Corrosive passions, feelings dull and
 low,
 The heart's quick throb upon the mental
 rack,
 Long day, and dreary night; the retro-
 spect
 Of half a century bloody and black,
 And the frail few years I may yet expect
 Hoary and hopeless, but less hard to
 bear,
 For I have been too long and deeply
 wreck'd
 On the lone rock of desolate Despair,
 To lift my eyes more to the passing sail
 Which shuns that reef so horrible and
 bare; 141
 Nor raise my voice—for who would heed
 my wail?
 I am not of this people, nor this age,
 And yet my harpings will unfold a tale
 Which shall preserve these times when not
 a page 145
 Of their perturbed annals could attract
 An eye to gaze upon their civil rage,
 Did not my verse embalm full many an act
 Worthless as they who wrought it: 'tis
 the doom
 Of spirits of my order to be rack'd
 In life, to wear their hearts out, and con-
 sume 151
 Their days in endless strife, and die
 alone;
 Then future thousands crowd around
 their tomb,
 And pilgrims come from climes where
 they have known
 The name of him—who now is but a
 name,
 And wasting homage o'er the sullen
 stone, 156
 Spread his—by him unheard, unheeded—
 fame;
 And mine at least hath cost me dear: to
 die
 Is nothing; but to wither thus—to tame
 My mind down from its own infinity—
 To live in narrow ways with little men,
 A common sight to every common eye,
 A wanderer, while even wolves can find a
 den, 163
 Ripp'd from all kindred, from all home,
 all things
 That make communion sweet, and
 soften pain—
 To feel me in the solitude of kings 166
 Without the power that makes them
 bear a crown—
 To envy every dove his nest and wings

Which waft him where the Apennine looks
 down
 On Arno, till he perches, it may be,
 Within my all inexorable town, 171
 Where yet my boys are, and that fatal she,
 Their mother, the cold partner who hath
 brought
 Destruction for a dowry—this to see
 And feel, and know without repair, hath
 taught 175
 A bitter lesson; but it leaves me free:
 I have not vilely found, nor basely
 sought,
 They made an Exile—not a slave of me.

CANTO THE SECOND

THE Spirit of the fervent days of Old,
 When words were things that came to
 pass, and thought
 Flash'd o'er the future, bidding men be-
 hold
 Their children's children's doom already
 brought
 Forth from the abyss of time which is to
 be 5
 The chaos of events, where lie half-
 wrought
 Shapes that must undergo mortality;
 What the great Seers of Israel wore
 within,
 That spirit was on them, and is on me,
 And if, Cassandra-like, amidst the din 10
 Of conflict none will hear, or hearing
 heed
 This voice from out the Wilderness, the
 sin
 Be theirs, and my own feelings be my meed,
 The only guerdon I have ever known.
 Hast thou not bled? and hast thou still
 to bleed, 15
 Italia? Ah! to me such things, foreshown
 With dim sepulchral light, bid me forget
 In thine irreparable wrongs my own;
 We can have but one country, and even yet
 Thou'rt mine—my bones shall be within
 thy breast, 20
 My soul within thy language, which
 once set
 With our old Roman sway in the wide
 West;
 But I will make another tongue arise
 As lofty and more sweet, in which ex-
 press'd
 The hero's ardour, or the lover's sighs,
 Shall find alike such sounds for every
 theme 26
 That every word, as brilliant as thy
 skies,
 Shall realise a poet's proudest dream,
 And make thee Europe's nightingale of
 song;
 So that all present speech to thine shall
 seem 30

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

The note of meaner birds, and every
 tongue
 Confess its barbarism when compared
 with thine.
 This shalt thou owe to him thou didst
 so wrong,
 Thy Tuscan bard, the banish'd Ghibelline.
 Woe! woe! the veil of coming centuries
 Is rent,—a thousand years which yet
 supine 36
 Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,
 Heaving in dark and sullen undulation,
 Float from eternity into these eyes;
 The storms yet sleep, the clouds still keep
 their station, 40
 The unborn earthquake yet is in the
 womb,
 The bloody chaos yet expects creation,
 But all things are disposing for thy doom;
 The elements await but for the word,
 'Let there be darkness!' and thou
 grow'st a tomb! 45
 Yes! thou, so beautiful, shalt feel the sword,
 Thou, Italy! so fair that Paradise,
 Revived in thee, blooms forth to man
 restored:
 Ah! must the sons of Adam lose it twice?
 Thou, Italy! whose ever golden fields,
 Plough'd by the sunbeams solely, would
 suffice 51
 For the world's granary; thou, whose sky
 heaven gilds
 With brighter stars, and robes with
 deeper blue;
 Thou, in whose pleasant places Summer
 builds
 Her palace, in whose cradle Empire grew,
 And form'd the Eternal City's orna-
 ments 56
 From spoils of kings whom freemen
 overthrew;
 Birthplace of heroes, sanctuary of saints,
 Where earthly first, then heavenly glory
 made
 Her home; thou, all which fondest fancy
 paints, 60
 And finds her prior vision but portray'd
 In feeble colours, when the eye—from
 the Alp
 Of horrid snow, and rock, and shaggy
 shade
 Of desert-loving pine, whose emerald scalp
 Nods to the storm—dilates and dotes
 o'er thee, 65
 And wistfully implores, as 'twere for
 help
 To see thy sunny fields, my Italy,
 Nearer and nearer yet, and dearer still
 The more approach'd, and dearest were
 they free,
 Thou—thou must wither to each tyrant's
 will: 70
 The Goth hath been,—the German,
 Frank, and Hun

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

[CANTO II

Are yet to come,—and on the imperial
 hill
 Ruin, already proud of the deeds done
 By the old barbarians, there awaits the
 new,
 Throned on the Palatine, while lost and
 won 75
 Rome at her feet lies bleeding; and the hue
 Of human sacrifice and Roman slaughter
 Troubles the clotted air, of late so blue,
 And deepens into red the saffron water
 Of Tiber, thick with dead; the helpless
 priest, 80
 And still more helpless nor less holy
 daughter,
 Vow'd to their God, have shrieking fled,
 And ceased
 Their ministry: the nations take their
 prey,
 Iberian, Almain, Lombard, and the
 And bird, wolf, vulture, more humane
 than they 85
 Are; these but gorge the flesh and lap
 the gore
 Of the departed, and then go their way;
 But those, the human savages, explore
 All paths of torture, and insatiate yet,
 With Ugolino hunger prowls for more.
 Nine moons shall rise o'er scenes like this
 and set; 91
 The chiefless army of the dead, which
 late
 Beneath the traitor Prince's banner met,
 Hath left its leader's ashes at the gate;
 Had but the royal Rebel lived, per-
 chance 95
 Thou hadst been spared, but his in-
 volved thy fate.
 Oh! Rome, the spoiler or the spoil of
 France,
 From Brennus to the Bourbon, never,
 never
 Shall foreign standard to thy walls ad-
 vance,
 But Tiber shall become a mournful river.
 Oh! when the strangers pass the Alps
 and Po, 101
 Crush them, ye rocks! floods overwhelm
 them, and for ever!
 Why sleep the idle avalanches so,
 To topple on the lonely pilgrim's head?
 Why doth Eridanus but overflow 105
 The peasant's harvest from his turbid bed?
 Were not each barbarous horde a nobler
 prey?
 Over Cambyzes' host the desert spread
 Her sandy ocean, and the sea-waves' sway
 Roll'd over Pharaoh and his thous-
 ands,—why, 110
 Mountains and waters, do ye not as
 they?
 And you, ye men! Romans who dare not
 die,

Sons of the conquerors who overthrew
 Those who o'erthrew proud Xerxes,
 where yet lie
 The dead whose tomb Oblivion never
 knew, 115
 Are the Alps weaker than Thermopylæ?
 Their passes more alluring to the view
 Of an invader? is it they, or ye,
 That to each host the mountain-gate
 unbar,
 And leave the march in peace, the
 passage free? 120
 Why, Nature's self detains the victor's car,
 And makes your land impregnable, if
 earth
 Could be so; but alone she will not war,
 Yet aids the warrior worthy of his birth
 In a soil where the mothers bring forth
 men: 125
 Not so with those whose souls are little
 worth;
 For them no fortress can avail,—the den
 Of the poor reptile which preserves its
 sting
 Is more secure than walls of adamant,
 when
 The hearts of those within are quivering.
 Are ye not brave? Yes, yet the Au-
 sonian soil 131
 Hath hearts, and hands, and arms, and
 hosts to bring
 Against Oppression; but how vain the toil,
 While still Division sows the seeds of
 woe
 And weakness, till the stranger reaps the
 spoil! 135
 Oh! my own beauteous land! so long laid
 low,
 So long the grave of thy own children's
 hopes,
 When there is but required a single blow
 To break the chain, yet—yet the Avenger
 stops,
 And Doubt and Discord step 'twixt
 thine and thee, 140
 And join their strength to that which
 with thee copes;
 What is there wanting then to set thee free,
 And show thy beauty in its fullest light?
 To make the Alps impassable; and we,
 Her sons, may do this with *one deed*—
 Unite. 145

CANTO THE THIRD

FROM out the mass of never-dying ill,
 The Plague, the Prince, the Stranger,
 and the Sword,
 Vials of wrath but emptied to refill
 And flow again, I cannot all record
 That crowds on my prophetic eye: the
 earth 5
 And ocean written o'er would not afford
 Space for the annal, yet it shall go forth;

Yes, all, though not by human pen, is
 graven,
 There where the farthest suns and stars
 have birth,
 Spread like a banner at the gate of heaven,
 The bloody scroll of our millennial
 wrongs 11
 Waves, and the echo of our groans is
 driven
 Athwart the sound of archangelic songs,
 And Italy, the martyr'd nation's gore,
 Will not in vain arise to where belongs
 Omnipotence and mercy evermore: 16
 Like to a harp-string stricken by the wind,
 The sound of her lament shall, rising
 o'er
 The seraph voices, touch the Almighty
 Mind.
 Meantime I, humblest of thy sons, and
 of 20
 Earth's dust by immortality refined
 To sense and suffering, though the vain
 may scoff,
 And tyrants threat, and meeker victims
 bow
 Before the storm because its breath is
 rough,
 To thee, my country! whom before, as
 now, 25
 I loved and love, devote the mournful
 lyre
 And melancholy gift high powers allow
 To read the future; and if now my fire
 Is not as once it shone o'er thee, forgive!
 I but foretell thy fortunes—then ex-
 pire; 30
 Think not that I would look on them and
 live.
 A spirit forces me to see and speak,
 And for my guerdon grants *not* to sur-
 vive;
 My heart shall be pour'd over thee and
 break: 34
 Yet for a moment, ere I must resume
 Thy sable web of sorrow, let me take
 Over the gleams that flash athwart thy
 gloom
 A softer glimpse; some stars shine
 through thy night,
 And many meteors, and above thy tomb
 Leans sculptured Beauty, which Death
 cannot blight: 40
 And from thine ashes boundless spirits
 rise
 To give thee honour, and the earth de-
 light;
 Thy soil shall still be pregnant with the wise,
 The gay, the learn'd, the generous, and
 the brave,
 Native to thee as summer to thy skies,
 Conquerors on foreign shores, and the far
 wave, 46
 Discoverers of new worlds, which take
 their name;

For *thee* alone they have no arm to save,
 And all thy recompense is in their fame,
 A noble one to them, but not to thee—
 Shall they be glorious, and thou still the
 same? 51
 Oh! more than these illustrious far shall be
 The being—and even yet he may be
 born—
 The mortal saviour who shall set thee
 free,
 And see thy diadem, so changed and
 worn 55
 By fresh barbarians, on thy brow re-
 placed;
 And the sweet sun replenishing thy
 morn,
 Thy moral morn, too long with clouds de-
 faced,
 And noxious vapours from Avernus
 risen,
 Such as all they must breathe who are
 debased 60
 By servitude, and have the mind in prison.
 Yet through this centuried eclipse of
 woe
 Some voices shall be heard, and earth
 shall listen;
 Poets shall follow in the path I show,
 And make it broader: the same brilliant
 sky 65
 Which cheers the birds to song shall bid
 them glow,
 And raise their notes as natural and high;
 Tuneful shall be their numbers; they
 shall sing
 Many of love, and some of liberty,
 But few shall soar upon that eagle's wing,
 And look in the sun's face with eagle's
 gaze, 71
 All free and fearless as the feather'd
 king,
 But fly more near the earth; how many a
 phrase
 Sublime shall lavish'd be on some small
 prince
 In all the prodigality of praise! 75
 And language, eloquently false, evince
 The harlotry of genius, which, like
 beauty,
 Too oft forgets its own self-reverence,
 And looks on prostitution as a duty.
 He who once enters in a tyrant's hall
 As guest is slave, his thoughts become
 a booty, 81
 And the first day which sees the chain
 enthal
 A captive, sees his half of manhood
 gone—
 The soul's emasculation saddens all
 His spirit; thus the Bard too near the
 throne 85
 Quails from his inspiration, bound to
 please,—
 How servile is the task to please alone!

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

[CANTO III

To smooth the verse to suit his sovereign's

And royal leisure, nor too much prolong
Aught save his eulogy, and find, and seize,
Or force, or forge fit argument of song!

Thus trammell'd, thus condemn'd to
Flattery's trebles, 92
He toils through all, still trembling to be
wrong:

For fear some noble thoughts, like heavenly
rebels,

Should rise up in high treason to his
brain, 95

He sings, as the Athenian spoke, with
pebbles
In's mouth, lest truth should stammer
through his strain.

But out of the long file of sonneteers
There shall be some who will not sing in
vain,

And he, their prince, shall rank among my
peers, 100

And love shall be his torment; but his
grief

Shall make an immortality of tears,
And Italy shall hail him as the Chief

Of Poet-lovers, and his higher song
Of Freedom wreath him with as green
a leaf. 105

But in a farther age shall rise along
The banks of Po two greater still than he;

The world which smiled on him shall do
them wrong

Till they are ashes, and repose with me.
The first will make an epoch with his
lyre, 110

And fill the earth with feats of chivalry:
His fancy like a rainbow, and his fire,

Like that of Heaven, immortal, and his
thought

Borne onward with a wing that cannot
tire;

Pleasure shall, like a butterfly new caught,
Flutter her lovely pinions o'er his
theme, 116

And Art itself seem into Nature wrought
By the transparency of his bright dream.—

The second, of a tenderer, sadder mood,
Shall pour his soul out o'er Jerusalem;

He, too, shall sing of arms, and Christian
blood 121

Shed where Christ bled for man; and his
high harp

Shall, by the willow over Jordan's flood,
Revive a song of Sion, and the sharp

Conflict, and final triumph of the brave
And pious, and the strife of hell to warp

Their hearts from their great purpose,
until wave 127

The red-cross banners where the first
red Cross

Was crimson'd from his veins who died
to save,

Shall be his sacred argument; the loss

Of years, of favour, freedom, even of
fame 131

Contested for a time, while the smooth
gloss

Of courts would slide o'er his forgotten
name

And call captivity a kindness, meant
To shield him from insanity or shame,

Such shall be his meet guerdon! who was sent
To be Christ's Laureate—they reward
him well! 137

Florence dooms me but death or banish-
ment,

Ferrara him a pittance and a cell,
Harder to bear and less deserved, for I

Had stung the factions which I strove to
quell; 141

But this meek man, who with a lover's eye
Will look on earth and heaven, and who

will deign
To embalm with his celestial flattery,

As poor a thing as e'er was spawn'd to
reign, 145

What will he do to merit such a doom?
Perhaps he'll love,—and is not love in
vain

Torture enough without a living tomb?
Yet it will be so—he and his compeer,

The Bard of Chivalry, will both con-
sume 150

In penury and pain too many a year,
And, dying in despondency, bequeath

To the kind world, which scarce will
yield a tear,

A heritage enriching all who breathe
With the wealth of a genuine poet's
soul, 155

And to their country a redoubled
wreath,

Unmatch'd by time; not Hellas can unroll
Through her olympiads two such
names, though one

Of hers be mighty;—and is this the
whole

Of such men's destiny beneath the sun?
Must all the finer thoughts, the thrilling
sense, 161

The electric blood with which their
arteries run,

Their body's self turned soul with the
intense

Feeling of that which is, and fancy of
That which should be, to such a recom-
pense 165

Conduct? shall their bright plumage on
the rough

Storm be still scatter'd? Yes, and it
must be;

For, form'd of far too penetrable stuff,
These birds of Paradise but long to flee

Back to their native mansion, soon they
find 170

Earth's mist with their pure pinions not
agree,

CANTO III]

And die or are degraded; for the mind
 Succumbs to long infection, and despair,
 And vulture passions flying close behind,
 Await the moment to assail and tear; 175
 And when at length the winged wanderers stoop,
 Then is the prey-birds' triumph, then they share
 The spoil, o'erpower'd at length by one fell swoop.
 Yet some have been untouch'd who learn'd to bear,
 Some whom no power could ever force to droop, 180
 Who could resist themselves even, hardest care!
 And task most hopeless; but some such have been,
 And if my name amongst the number were,
 That destiny austere, and yet serene,
 Were prouder than more dazzling fame unblest'd; 185
 The Alp's snow summit nearer heaven is seen
 Than the volcano's fierce eruptive crest,
 Whose splendour from the black abyss is flung,
 While the scorch'd mountain, from whose burning breast
 A temporary torturing flame is wrung,
 Shines for a night of terror, then repels
 Its fire back to the hell from whence it sprung, 192
 The hell which in its entrails ever dwells.

CANTO THE FOURTH

MANY are poets who have never penn'd
 Their inspiration, and perchance the best:
 They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
 Their thoughts to meaner beings; they compress'd
 The god within them, and rejoin'd the stars 5
 Unlaurel'd upon earth, but far more blest'd
 Than those who are degraded by the jars
 Of passion, and their frailties link'd to fame,
 Conquerors of high renown, but full of scars.
 Many are poets but without the name,
 For what is poesy but to create 11
 From overfeeling good or ill; and aim
 At an external life beyond our fate,
 And be the new Prometheus of new men,
 Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late, 15

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain,
 And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
 Who, having lavish'd his high gift in vain,
 Lies chain'd to his lone rock by the sea-shore?
 So be it: we can bear.—But thus all they
 Whose intellect is an o'ermastering power 21
 Which still recoils from its encumbering clay
 Or lightens it to spirit, whatsoe'er
 The form which their creations may essay,
 Are bards; the kindled marble's bust may wear 25
 More poesy upon its speaking brow
 Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear;
 One noble stroke with a whole life may glow,
 Or deify the canvas till it shine
 With beauty so surpassing all below,
 That they who kneel to idols so divine
 Break no commandment, for high heaven is there
 Transfused, transfigured: and the line
 Of poesy, which peoples but the air
 With thought and beings of our thought reflected, 35
 Can do no more: then let the artist share
 The palm, he shares the peril, and dejected
 Faints o'er the labour unapproved—
 Alas!
 Despair and Genius are too oft connected. 39
 Within the ages which before me pass
 Art shall resume and equal even the sway
 Which with Apelles and old Phidias
 She held in Hellas' unforgotten day.
 Ye shall be taught by Ruin to revive
 The Grecian forms at least from their decay, 45
 And Roman souls at last again shall live
 In Roman works wrought by Italian hands,
 And temples, loftier than the old temples, give
 New wonders to the world; and while still stands
 The austere Pantheon, into heaven shall soar 50
 A dome, its image, while the base expands
 Into a fane surpassing all before,
 Such as all flesh shall flock to kneel in: ne'er
 Such sight hath been unfolded by a door
 As this, to which all nations shall repair
 And lay their sins at this huge gate of heaven. 56
 And the bold Architect unto whose care

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

[CANTO IV

The daring charge to raise it shall be given,
Whom all Arts shall acknowledge as
their lord, 59

Whether into the marble chaos driven
His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
Israel left Egypt, stop the waves in
stone,

Or hues of Hell be by his pencil pour'd
Over the damn'd before the Judgment-
throne,

Such as I saw them, such as all shall see,
Or fanes be built of grandeur yet un-
known, 66

The stream of his great thoughts shall
spring from me,

The Ghibelline, who traversed the three
realms

Which form the empire of eternity.
Amidst the clash of swords, and clang of
helms, 70

The age which I anticipate, no less
Shall be the Age of Beauty, and while
whelms

Calamity the nations with distress,
The genius of my country shall arise,

A Cedar towering o'er the Wilderness,
Lovely in all its branches to all eyes, 76

Fragrant as fair, and recognised afar,
Wafting its native incense through the
skies.

Sovereigns shall pause amidst their sport
of war,

Wean'd for an hour from blood, to turn
and gaze, 80

On canvas or on stone; and they who
mar

All beauty upon earth, compell'd to praise,
Shall feel the power of that which they
destroy;

And Art's mistaken gratitude shall raise
To tyrants who but take her for a toy,

Emblems and monuments, and prosti-
tute 86

Her charms to pontiffs proud, who but
employ

The man of genius as the meanest brute
To bear a burthen, and to serve a need,

To sell his labours, and his soul to boot.
Who toils for nations may be poor indeed,

But free; who sweats for monarchs is no
more 92

Than the gilt chamberlain, who, clothed
and fee'd,

Stands sleek and slavish, bowing at his
door.

Oh, Power that rulest and inspirest!
how 95

Is it that they on earth, whose earthly
power

Is likest thine in heaven in outward show,
Least like to thee in attributes divine,

Tread on the universal necks that bow,
And then assure us that their rights are
thine? 100

And how is it that they, the sons of fame,
Whose inspiration seems to them to
shine

From high, they whom the nations oftset
name,

Must pass their days in penury or pain,
Or step to grandeur through the paths
of shame, 105

And wear a deeper brand and gaudier
chain?

Or if their destiny be born aloof
From lowliness, or tempted thence in
vain,

In their own souls sustain a harder proof,
The inner war of passions deep and
fierce? 110

Florence! when thy harsh sentence
razed my roof,

I loved thee; but the vengeance of my
verse,

The hate of injuries which every year
Makes greater, and accumulates my
curse,

Shall live, outliving all thou holdest dear,
Thy pride, thy wealth, thy freedom, and
even that, 116

The most infernal of all evils here,
The sway of petty tyrants in a state;

For such sway is not limited to kings,
And demagogues yield to them but in
date, 120

As swept off sooner; in all deadly things,
Which make men hate themselves, and
one another,

In discord, cowardice, cruelty, all that
springs,

From Death the Sin-born's incest with his
mother,

In rank oppression in its rudest shape,
The faction Chief is but the Sultan's
brother, 126

And the worst despot's far less human ape:
Florence! when this lone spirit, which
so long

Yearn'd, as the captive toiling at escape,
To fly back to thee in despite of wrong,

An exile, sadder of all prisoners, 131

Who has the whole world for a dungeon
strong,

Seas, mountains, and the horizon's verge
for bars,

Which shut him from the sole small spot
of earth,

Where—whatsoever his fate—he still
were hers, 135

His country's, and might die where he had
birth—

Florence! when this lone spirit shall re-
turn

To kindred spirits, thou wilt feel my
worth,

And seek to honour with an empty urn
The ashes thou shalt ne'er obtain—
Alas! 140

'What have I done to thee, my people?'
 Stern
 Are all thy dealings, but in this they pass
 The limits of man's common malice, for
 All that a citizen could be I was;
 Raised by thy will, all thine in peace or war,
 And for this thou hast warr'd with me—
 'Tis done: 146
 I may not overleap the eternal bar

Built up between us, and will die alone,
 Beholding with the dark eye of a seer
 The evil days to gifted souls foreshown,
 Foretelling them to those who will not hear.
 As in the old time, till the hour be come
 When Truth shall strike their eyes
 through many a tear, 153
 And make them own the Prophet in his
 tomb.

THE MORGANTE MAGGIORE

OF PULCI

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Morgante Maggiore, of the first canto of which this translation is offered, divides with the Orlando Innamorato the honour of having formed and suggested the style and story of Ariosto. The great defects of Boiardo were his treating too seriously the narratives of chivalry, and his harsh style. Ariosto, in his continuation, by a judicious mixture of the gaiety of Pulci, has avoided the one; and Berni, in his reformation of Boiardo's poem, has corrected the other. Pulci may be considered as the precursor and model of Berni altogether, as he has partly been to Ariosto, however inferior to both his copyists. He is no less the founder of a new style of poetry very lately sprung up in England. I allude to that of the ingenious Whistlecraft. The serious poems on Roncesvalles in the same language, and more particularly the excellent one of Mr. Merivale, are to be traced to the same source. It has never yet been decided entirely whether Pulci's intention was or was not to deride the religion which is one of his favourite topics. It appears to me, that such an intention would have been no less hazardous to the poet than to the priest, particularly in that age and country; and the permission to publish the poem, and its reception among the classics of Italy, prove that it neither was nor is so interpreted. That he intended to ridicule the monastic life, and suffered his imagination to play with the simple dulness of his converted giant, seems evident enough; but surely it were as unjust to accuse him of irreverence on this account, as to denounce Fielding for his Parson Adams, Barnabas, Thwackum, Supple, and the Ordinary in Jonathan Wild,—or Scott, for the exquisite use of his Covenanters in the 'Tales of my Landlord.'

In the following translation I have used the liberty of the original with the proper names: as Pulci uses Gan, Ganellon, or Ganellone; Carlo, Carlomagno, or Carlomano; Rondel, or Rondello, &c., as it suits his convenience; so has the translator. In other respects the version is faithful to the best of the translator's ability in combining his interpretation of the one language with the not very easy task of reducing it to the same versification in the other. The reader, on comparing it with the original, is requested to remember that the antiquated language of Pulci, however pure, is not easy to the generality of Italians themselves, from its great mixture of Tuscan proverbs; and he may therefore be more indulgent to the present attempt. How far the translator has succeeded, and whether or no he shall continue the work, are questions which the public will decide. He was induced to make the experiment partly by his love for, and partial intercourse with, the Italian language, of which it is so easy to acquire a slight knowledge, and with which it is so nearly impossible for a foreigner to become accurately conversant. The Italian language is like a capricious beauty, who accords her smiles to all, her favours to few, and sometimes least to those who have courted her longest. The translator wished also to present in an English dress a part at least of a poem never yet rendered into a northern language; at the same time that it has been the original of some of the most celebrated productions on this side of the Alps, as well as of those recent experiments in poetry in England which have been already mentioned.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

In the beginning was the Word next God;
 God was the Word, the Word no less
 was he:
 This was in the beginning, to my mode
 Of thinking, and without him nought
 could be:
 Therefore, just Lord! from out thy high abode,
 Benign and pious, bid an angel flee,
 One only, to be my companion, who
 Shall help my famous, worthy, old song
 through.

II

And thou, oh Virgin! daughter, mother,
 bride
 Of the same Lord, who gave to you each
 key
 Of heaven, and hell, and everything beside,
 The day thy Gabriel said 'All hail!' to
 thee,
 Since to thy servants pity's ne'er denied,
 With flowing rhymes, a pleasant style
 and free,
 Be to my verses then benignly kind,
 And to the end illuminate my mind.

III

'Twas in the season when sad Philomel
Weeps with her sister, who remembers
and
Deplores the ancient woes which both be-
fell,
And makes the nymphs enamour'd, to
the hand
Of Phaeton by Phœbus loved so well
His car (but temper'd by his sire's com-
mand)
Was given, and on the horizon's verge just
now
Appear'd, so that Tithonus scratch'd his
brow:

IV

When I prepared my bark first to obey,
As it should still obey, the helm, my mind,
And carry prose or rhyme, and this my lay
Of Charles the Emperor, whom you will
find
By several pens already praised; but they
Who to diffuse his glory were inclined,
For all that I can see in prose or verse,
Have understood Charles badly, and
wrote worse.

V

Leonardo Aretino said already,
That if, like Pepin, Charles had had a
writer
Of genius quick, and diligently steady,
No hero would in history look brighter;
He in the cabinet being always ready,
And in the field a most victorious fighter,
Who for the church and Christian faith
had wrought,
Certes, far more than yet is said or thought.

VI

You still may see at St. Liberatore,
The abbey, no great way from Manopell,
Erected in the Abruzzi to his glory,
Because of the great battle in which fell
A pagan king, according to the story,
And felon people whom Charles sent to
hell:
And there are bones so many, and so many,
Near them Giusaffa's would seem few, if
any.

VII

But the world, blind and ignorant, don't
prize
His virtues as I wish to see them: thou,
Florence, by his great bounty don't arise,
And hast, and may have, if thou wilt
allow,
All proper customs and true courtesies:
Whate'er thou hast acquired from then
till now,
With knightly courage, treasure, or the
lance,

¹ don't! dost conj.

Is sprung from out the noble blood of
France.

VIII

Twelve paladins had Charles in court, ot
whom
The wisest and most famous was Or-
lando;
Him traitor Gan conducted to the tomb
In Roncesvalles, as the villain plann'd
too,
While the horn rang so loud, and knell'd
the doom
Of their sad rout, though he did all
knight can do;
And Dante in his comedy has given
To him a happy seat with Charles in
heaven.

IX

'Twas Christmas-day; in Paris all his court
Charles held; the chief, I say, Orlando
was,
The Dane; Astolfo there too did resort,
Also Ansuigi, the gay time to pass
In festival and in triumphal sport,
The much renown'd St. Dennis being
the cause;
Angiolin of Bayonne, and Oliver,
And gentle Belinghieri too came there:

X

Avolio, and Arino, and Othone
Of Normandy, and Richard Paladin,
Wise Hamo, and the ancient Salamone,
Walter of Lion's Mount and Baldovin,
Who was the son of the sad Ganellone,
Were there, exciting too much gladness
in
The son of Pepin:—when his knights came
hither,
He groan'd with joy to see them all to-
gether.

XI

But watchful Fortune, lurking, takes good
heed
Eversome bar'gainst our intents to bring,
While Charles reposed him thus, in word
and deed,
Orlando ruled court, Charles, and every-
thing;
Curst Gan, with envy bursting, had such
need
To vent his spite, that thus with Charles
the king
One day he openly began to say,
'Orlando must we always then obey?

XII

'A thousand times I've been about to say,
Orlando too presumptuously goes on;
Here are we, counts, kings, dukes, to own
thy sway,
Hamo, and Otho, Ogier, Solomon,

Each have to honour thee and to obey;
But he has too much credit near the
throne,
Which we won't suffer, but are quite de-
cided
By such a boy to be no longer guided.

XIII

'And even at Aspramont thou didst begin
To let him know he was a gallant knight,
And by the fount did much the day to win;
But I know *who* that day had won the
fight
If it had not for good Gherardo been;
The victory was Almonte's else; his
sight
He kept upon the standard, and the laurels
In fact and fairness are his earning,
Charles.

XIV

'If thou rememberest being in Gascony,
When there advanced the nations out of
Spain,
The Christian cause had suffer'd shame-
fully,
Had not his valour driven them back
again.
Best speak the truth when there's a reason
why:
Know then, oh Emperor! that all com-
plain:
As for myself, I shall repossess the mounts
O'er which I cross'd with two and sixty
counts.

XV

'Tis fit thy grandeur should dispense re-
lief,
So that each here may have his proper
part,
For the whole court is more or less in grief:
Perhaps thou deem'st this lad a Mars in
heart?'
Orlando one day heard this speech in brief,
As by himself it chanced he sate apart:
Displeased he was with Gan because he
said it,
But much more still that Charles should
give him credit.

XVI

And with the sword he would have mur-
der'd Gan,
But Oliver thrust in between the pair,
And from his hand extracted Durlindan,
And thus at length they separated were.
Orlando, angry too with Carloman,
Wanted but little to have slain him there;
Then forth alone from Paris went the chief,
And burst and madden'd with disdain and
grief.

XVII

From Ermellina, consort of the Dane,
He took Cortana, and then took Ron-
dell,
And on towards Brara prick'd him o'er the
plain;
And when she saw him coming, Alda-
belle
Stretch'd forth her arms to clasp her lord
again:
Orlando, in whose brain all was not well,
As 'Welcome, my Orlando, home,' she
said,
Raised up his sword to smite her on the
head,

XVIII

Like him a fury counsels; his revenge
On Gan in that rash act he seem'd to
take,
Which Aldabella thought extremely strange;
But soon Orlando found himself awake;
And his spouse took his bridle on this
change,
And he dismounted from his horse, and
spoke
Of everything which pass'd without de-
mur,
And then reposed himself some days with
her.

XIX

Then full of wrath departed from the place,
And far as pagan countries roam'd
astray,
And while he rode, yet still at every pace
The traitor Gan remember'd by the way;
And wandering on in error a long space,
An abbey which in a lone desert lay,
'Midst glens obscure, and distant lands,
he found,
Which form'd the Christian's and the
pagan's bound.

XX

The abbot was call'd Clermont, and by
blood
Descended from Anglante: under cover
Of a great mountain's brow the abbey
stood,
But certain savage giants look'd him
over;
One Passamont was foremost of the brood,
And Alabaster and Morgante hover
Second and third, with certain slings, and
throw
In daily jeopardy the place below.

XXI

The monks could pass the convent gate no
more,
Nor leave their cells for water or for
wood;

MORGANTE MAGGIORE

[CANTO I

Orlando knock'd, but none would ope,
before
Unto the prior it at length seem'd good;
Easter'd, he said that he was taught to
adore
Him who was born of Mary's holiest
blood,
And was baptized a Christian; and then
show'd
How to the abbey he had found his road.

XXII

Said the abbot, 'You are welcome; what
is mine
We give you freely, since that you believe
With us in Mary Mother's Son divine;
And that you may not, cavalier, conceive
The cause of our delay to let you in
To be rusticity, you shall receive
The reason why our gate was barr'd to
you:
Thus those who in suspicion live must do.

XXIII

'When hither to inhabit first we came
These mountains, albeit that they are
obscure,
As you perceive, yet without fear or blame
They seem'd to promise an asylum sure:
From savage brutes alone, too fierce to
tame,
'Twas fit our quiet dwelling to secure;
But now, if here we'd stay, we needs must
guard
Against domestic beasts with watch and
ward.

XXIV

'These make us stand, in fact, upon the
watch;
For late there have appear'd three
giants rough;
What nation or what kingdom bore the
batch
I know not, but they are all of savage
stuff;
When force and malice with some genius
match,
You know, they can do all—we are not
enough:
And these so much our orisons derange,
I know not what to do, till matters change.

XXV

'Our ancient fathers living the desert in,
For just and holy works were duly fed;
Think not they lived on locusts sole, 'tis
certain
That manna was rain'd down from
heaven instead;
But here 'tis fit we keep on the alert in
Our bounds, or taste the stones shower'd
down for bread,

From off yon mountain daily raining
faster,
And flung by Passamont and Alabaster.

XXVI

'The third, Morgante, 's savagest by far;
he
Plucks up pines, beeches, poplar-trees,
and oaks,
And flings them, our community to bury;
And all that I can do but more pro-
vokes.'
While thus they parley in the cemetery,
A stone from one of their gigantic
strokes,
Which nearly crush'd Rondell, came tum-
bling over,
So that he took a long leap under cover.

XXVII

'For God-sake, cavalier, come in with
speed;
The manna's falling now,' the abbot
cried.
'This fellow does not wish my horse
should feed,
Dear Abbot,' Roland unto him replied.
'Of restiveness he'd cure him had he need;
That stone seems with good will and aim
applied.'
The holy father said, 'I don't deceive;
They'll one day fling the mountain, I
believe.'

XXVIII

Orlando bade them take care of Ron-
dello,
And also made a breakfast of his own:
'Abbot,' he said, 'I want to find that fellow
Who flung at my good horse yon corner-
stone.'
Said the abbot, 'Let not my advice seem
shallow;
As to a brother dear I speak alone;
I would dissuade you, baron, from this
strife,
As knowing sure that you will lose your
life.'

XXIX

'That Passamont has in his hand three
darts—
Such slings, clubs, ballast-stones, that
yield you must:
You know that giants have much stouter
hearts
Than us, with reason, in proportion
just:
If go you will, guard well against their arts,
For these are very barbarous and ro-
bust.'
Orlando answer'd, 'This I'll see, be sure,
And walk the wild on foot to be secure.'

XXX

The abbot sign'd the great cross on his front,
 'Then go you with God's benison and mine:'

Orlando, after he had scaled the mount,
 As the abbot had directed, kept the line
 Right to the usual haunt of Passamont;
 Who, seeing him alone in this design,
 Survey'd him fore and aft with eyes observant,
 Then ask'd him, 'If he wish'd to stay as servant?'

XXXI

And promised him an office of great ease.
 But said Orlando, 'Saracen insane!
 I come to kill you, if it shall so please
 God, not to serve as footboy in your train;

You with his monks so oft have broke the peace—

Vile dog! 'tis past his patience to sustain.'

The giant ran to fetch his arms, quite furious,

When he received an answer so injurious.

XXXII

And being return'd to where Orlando stood,

Who had not moved him from the spot,
 and swinging

The cord, he hurl'd a stone with strength so rude,

As show'd a sample of his skill in sling-
 ing;

It roll'd on Count Orlando's helmet good
 And head, and set both head and helmet

ringing,

So that he swoon'd with pain as if he died,
 But more than dead, he seem'd so stupified.

XXXIII

Then Passamont, who thought him slain outright,

Said, 'I will go, and while he lies along,
 Disarm me: why such craven did I fight?'

But Christ his servants ne'er abandons long,

Especially Orlando, such a knight,
 As to desert would almost be a wrong.

While the giant goes to put off his defences,
 Orlando has recall'd his force and senses:

XXXIV

And loud he shouted, 'Giant, where dost go?

Thou thought'st me doubtless for the bier outlaid;

To the right about—without wings thou'rt too slow

To fly my vengeance—currish rene-
 gade!

MORGANTE MAGGIORE

'Twas but by treachery thou laid'st me low.'

The giant his astonishment betray'd,
 And turn'd about, and stopp'd his journey

on,

And then he stoop'd to pick up a great stone.

XXXV

Orlando had Cortana bare in hand;
 To split the head in twain was what he

schemed:

Cortana clave the skull like a true brand
 And pagan Passamont died unredeem'd,

Yet harsh and haughty, as he lay he bann'd,
 And most devoutly Macon still blas-

phemed;

But while his crude, rude blasphemies he heard,

Orlando thank'd the Father and the Word,—

XXXVI

Saying, 'What grace to me thou'st this day given!

And I to thee, O Lord! am ever bound.
 I know my life was saved by thee from

heaven,

Since by the giant I was fairly down'd.
 All things by thee are measured just and

even;

Our power without thine aid would nought be found:

I pray thee take heed of me, till I can
 At least return once more to Carloman.'

XXXVII

And having said thus much, he went his way;

And Alabaster he found out below,
 Doing the very best that in him lay

To root from out a bank a rock or two.
 Orlando, when he reach'd him, loud 'gan

say,

'How think'st thou, glutton, such a stone to throw?'

When Alabaster heard his deep voice ring,
 He suddenly betook him to his sling,

XXXVIII

And hurl'd a fragment of a size so large,
 That if it had in fact fulfill'd its mission,

And Roland not avail'd him of his targe,
 There would have been no need of a

physician.

Orlando set himself in turn to charge,
 And in his bulky bosom made incision

With all his sword. The lout fell; but o'er-
 thrown, he

However by no means forgot Macone.

XXXIX

Morgante had a palace in his mode,
 Composed of branches, logs of wood,
 and earth,

And stretch'd himself at ease in this abode,
And shut himself at night within his
berth.

Orlando knock'd, and knock'd again, to
goad
The giant from his sleep; and he came
forth,
The door to open, like a crazy thing,
For a rough dream had shook him
slumbering.

XL

He thought that a fierce serpent had
attack'd him;
And Mahomet he call'd; but Mahomet
Is nothing worth, and not an instant
back'd him;
But praying blessed Jesu, he was set
At liberty from all the fears which rack'd
him;
And to the gate he came with great re-
gret—
'Who knocks here?' grumbling all the
while, said he.
'That,' said Orlando, 'you will quickly
see:

'I come to preach to you, as to your
brothers,
Sent by the miserable monks—repen-
tance;
For Providence divine, in you and others,
Condemns the evil done my new
acquaintance.
'Tis writ on high—your wrong must pay
another's:
From heaven itself is issued out this
sentence.

Know, then, that colder now than a pilaster
I left your Passamont and Alabaster.'

XLII

Morgante said, 'Oh, gentle cavalier!
Now by thy God say me no villany:
The favour of your name I fain would
hear,
And if a Christian, speak for courtesy.'
Replied Orlando, 'So much to your ear
I by my faith disclose contentedly;
Christ I adore, who is the genuine Lord,
And, if you please, by you may be adored.'

XLIII

The Saracen rejoin'd in humble tone,
'I have had an extraordinary vision;
A savage serpent fell on me alone,
And Macon would not pity my con-
dition;
Hence to thy God, who for ye did atone
Upon the cross, prefer'd I my petition;
His timely succour set me safe and free,
And I a Christian am disposed to be.'

XLIV

Orlando answer'd, 'Baron just and pious,
If this good wish your heart can really
move
To the true God, you will not then deny us
Eternal honour, you will go above,
And, if you please, as friends we will ally
us,
And I will love you with a perfect love.
Your idols are vain liars, full of fraud:
The only, true God is the Christians' God.

XLV

'The Lord descended to the virgin breast
Of Mary Mother, sinless and divine;
If you acknowledge the Redeemer blest,
Without whom neither sun nor star can
shine,
Abjure bad Macon's false and felon test,
Your renegade god, and worship mine,
Baptize yourself with zeal, since you re-
pent.'
To which Morgante answer'd, 'I'm con-
tent.'

XLVI

And then Orlando to embrace him flew,
And made much of his convert, as he
cried,
'To the abbey I will gladly marshal you.'
To whom Morgante, 'Let us go,' re-
plied;
'I to the friars have for peace to sue.'
Which thing Orlando heard with in-
ward pride,
Saying, 'My brother, so devout and good,
Ask the abbot pardon, as I wish you
would:

XLVII

'Since God has granted your illumination,
Accepting you in mercy for his own,
Humility should be your first oblation.'
Morgante said, 'For goodness' sake,
make known,—
Since that your God is to be mine—your
station,
And let your name in verity be shown;
Then will I everything at your command
do.'
On which the other said, he was Orlando.

XLVIII

'Then,' quoth the giant, 'blessed be Jesu
A thousand times with gratitude and
praise!
Oft, perfect baron! have I heard of you
Through all the different periods of my
days:
And, as I said, to be your vassal too
I wish, for your great gallantry always.'
Thus reasoning, they continued much to
say,
And onwards to the abbey went their way.

XLIX

And by the way about the giants dead
Orlando with Morgante reason'd: 'Be,
For their decease, I pray you, comforted;
And, since it is God's pleasure, pardon
me;
A thousand wrongs unto the monks they
bred,
And our true Scripture soundeth openly,
Good is rewarded, and chastised the ill,
Which the Lord never faileth to fulfil:

'Because his love of justice unto all
Is such, he wills his judgment should
devour
All who have sin, however great or small;
But good he well remembers to restore.
Nor without justice holy could we call
Him, whom I now require you to adore.
All men must make his will their wishes
sway,
And quickly and spontaneously obey.

'And here our doctors are of one accord,
Coming on this point to the same con-
clusion,
That in their thoughts who praise in
heaven the Lord
If pity e'er was guilty of intrusion
For their unfortunate relations stored
In hell below, and damn'd in great con-
fusion,
Their happiness would be reduced to
nought,
And thus unjust the Almighty's self be
thought.

'But they in Christ have firmest hope, and
all
Which seems to him, to them too must
appear
Well done; nor could it otherwise befall;
He never can in any purpose err.
If sire or mother suffer endless thrall,
They don't disturb themselves for him
or her:
What pleases God to them must joy in-
spire;—
Such is the observance of the eternal choir.'

LIII

'A word unto the wise,' Morgante said,
'Is wont to be enough, and you shall see
How much I grieve about my brethren
dead;
And if the will of God seem good to me,
Just, as you tell me, 'tis in heaven obey'd—
Ashes to ashes,—merry let us be!
I will cut off the hands from both their
trunks,
And carry them unto the holy monks.

LIV

'So that all persons may be sure and certain
That they are dead, and have no further
fear
To wander solitary this desert in,
And that they may perceive my spirit
clear
By the Lord's grace, who hath withdrawn
the curtain
Of darkness, making his bright realm
appear.
He cut his brethren's hands off at these
words,
And left them to the savage beasts and birds.

LV

Then to the abbey they went on together,
Where waited them the abbot in great
doubt.
The monks, who knew not yet the fact, ran
thither,
To their superior, all in breathless rout,
Saying with tremor, 'Please to tell us
whether
You wish to have this person in or out?'
The abbot, looking through upon the giant,
Too greatly fear'd, at first, to be compliant.

Orlando, seeing him thus agitated,
Said quickly, 'Abbot, be thou of good
cheer;
He Christ believes, as Christian must be
rated,
And hath renounced his Macon false';
which here
Morgante with the hands corroborated,
A proof of both the giants' fate quite
clear:
Thence, with due thanks, the abbot God
adored,
Saying, 'Thou hast contented me, oh Lord!'

Hegazed; Morgante's height he calculated,
And more than once contemplated his
size;
And then he said, 'Oh giant celebrated!
Know, that no more my wonder will
arise,
How you could tear and fling the trees you
late did,
When I behold your form with my own
eyes.

You now a true and perfect friend will show
Yourself to Christ, as once you were a foe.

LVIII

'And one of our apostles, Saul once
named,
Long persecuted sore the faith of Christ,
Till, one day, by the Spirit being inflamed,
"Why dost thou persecute me thus?"
said Christ;

MORGANTE MAGGIORE

[CANTO I

And then from his offence he was reclaim'd,
 And went for ever after preaching
 Christ,
 And of the faith became a trump, whose
 sounding
 O'er the whole earth is echoing and re-
 bounding.

LIX

'So, my Morgante, you may do likewise:
 He who repents—thus writes the Evan-
 gelist—
 Occasions more rejoicing in the skies
 Than ninety-nine of the celestial list.
 You may be sure, should each desire arise
 With zeal for the Lord, that you'll
 exist
 Among the happy saints for evermore;
 But you were lost and damn'd to hell
 before!'

LX

And thus great honour to Morgante paid
 The abbot: many days they did repose.
 One day, as with Orlando they both stray'd,
 And saunter'd here and there, where'er
 they chose,
 The abbot show'd a chamber, where array'd
 Much armour was, and hung up certain
 bows;
 And one of these Morgante for a whim
 Girt on, though useles, he believed, to
 him.

LXI

There being a want of water in the place,
 Orlando, like a worthy brother, said,
 'Morgante, I could wish you in this case
 To go for water.' 'You shall be obey'd
 In all commands,' was the reply, 'straight-
 ways.'

Upon his shoulder a great tub he laid,
 And went out on his way unto a fountain,
 Where he was wont to drink below the
 mountain.

LXII

Arrived there, a prodigious noise he hears,
 Which suddenly along the forest spread;
 Whereat from out his quiver he prepares
 An arrow for his bow, and lifts his head;
 And lo! a monstrous herd of swine appears,
 And onward rushes with tempestuous
 tread,
 And to the fountain's brink precisely pours;
 So that the giant's join'd by all the boars.

Morgante at a venture shot an arrow,
 Which pierced a pig precisely in the ear,
 And pass'd unto the other side quite
 thorough;
 So that the boar, defunct, lay tripp'd up
 near.

Another, to revenge his fellow farrow,
 Against the giant rush'd in fierce career,
 And reach'd the passage with so swift a
 foot,
 Morgante was not now in time to shoot.

LXIV

Perceiving that the pig was on him close,
 He gave him such a punch upon the head,
 As floor'd him so that he no more arose,
 Smashing the very bone; and he fell dead
 Next to the other. Having seen such blows,
 The other pigs along the valley fled;
 Morgante on his neck the bucket took,
 Full from the spring, which neither
 swerved nor shook.

LXV

The tub was on one shoulder, and there
 were
 The hogs on t'other, and he brush'd
 apace
 On to the abbey, though by no means near,
 Nor spilt one drop of water in his race.
 Orlando, seeing him so soon appear
 With the dead boars, and with that
 brimful vase,
 Marvell'd to see his strength so very great;
 So did the abbot, and set wide the gate.

LXVI

The monks, who saw the water fresh and
 good,
 Rejoiced, but much more to perceive the
 pork;
 All animals are glad at sight of food:
 They lay their breviaries to sleep, and
 work
 With greedy pleasure, and in such a mood,
 That the flesh needs no salt beneath
 their fork.
 Of rankness and of rot there is no fear,
 For all the fasts are now left in arrear.

LXVII

As though they wish'd to burst at once,
 they ate;
 And gorged so that, as if the bones had
 been
 In water, sorely grieved the dog and cat,
 Perceiving that they all were pick'd too
 clean.
 The abbot, who to all did honour great,
 A few days after this convivial scene,
 Gave to Morgante a fine horse, well
 train'd,
 Which he long time had for himself main-
 tain'd.

The horse Morgante to a meadow led,
 To gallop, and to put him to the proof,
 Thinking that he a back of iron had,
 Or to skim eggs unbroke was light
 enough;

CANTO I]

But the horse, sinking with the pain, fell
dead,
And burst, while cold on earth lay head
and hoof.
Morgante said, 'Get up, thou sulky cur!'
And still continued pricking with the spur.

LXIX

But finally he thought fit to dismount,
And said, 'I am as light as any feather,
And he has burst;—to this what say you,
count?'
Orlando answer'd, 'Like a ship's mast
rather
You seem to me, and with the truck for
front:
Let him go! Fortune wills that we together
Should march, but you on foot Morgante
still.'
To which the giant answer'd, 'So I will.

LXX

'When there shall be occasion, you will see
How I approve my courage in the fight.'
Orlando said, 'I really think you'll be,
If it should prove God's will, a goodly
knight;
Nor will you napping there discover me.
But never mind your horse, though out
of sight
'Twere best to carry him into some wood,
If but the means or way I understood.'

LXXI

The giant said, 'Then carry him I will,
Since that to carry me he was so slack—
To render, as the gods do, good for ill;
But lend a hand to place him on my
back.'
Orlando answer'd, 'If my counsel still
May weigh, Morgante, do not under-
take
To lift or carry this dead courser, who,
As you have done to him, will do to you.

LXXII

'Take care he don't revenge himself,
though dead,
As Nessus did of old beyond all cure.
I don't know if the fact you've heard or
read;
But he will make you burst, you may be
sure.'
'But help him on my back,' Morgante said,
'And you shall see what weight I can
endure.
In place, my gentle Roland, of this palfrey;
With all the bells, I'd carry yonder belfry.'

LXXIII

The abbot said, 'The steeple may do well,
But, for the bells, you've broken them,
I wot.'
Morgante answer'd, 'Let them pay in hell
The penalty who lie dead in yon grot;'

MORGANTE MAGGIORE

And hoisting up the horse from where he
fell,
He said, 'Now look if I the gout have
got,
Orlando, in the legs—or if I have force;'
And then he made two gambols with the
horse.

LXXIV

Morgante was like any mountain framed;
So if he did this 'tis no prodigy;
But secretly himself Orlando blamed,
Because he was one of his family;
And fearing that he might be hurt or
maim'd,
Once more he bade him lay his burden
by:
'Put down, nor bear him further the
desert in.'
Morgante said, 'I'll carry him for certain.'

LXXV

He did; and stow'd him in some nook
away,
And to the abbey then return'd with
speed.
Orlando said, 'Why longer do we stay?
Morgante, here is nought to do indeed.'
The abbot by the hand he took one day,
And said, with great respect, he had
agreed
To leave his reverence; but for this de-
cision
He wish'd to have his pardon and per-
mission.

LXXVI

The honours they continued to receive
Perhaps exceeded what his merits
claim'd:
He said, 'I mean, and quickly, to retrieve
The lost days of time past, which may
be blamed;
Some days ago I should have ask'd your
leave,
Kind father, but I really was ashamed,
And know not how to show my sentiment,
So much I see you with our stay content.

LXXVII

'But in my heart I bear through every
clime
The abbot, abbey, and this solitude—
So much I love you in so short a time;
For me, from heaven reward you with
all good
The God so true, the eternal Lord sub-
lime!
Whose kingdom at the last hath open
stood.
Meantime we stand expectant of your
blessing,
And recommend us to your prayers with
pressing.'

LXXVIII

Now when the abbot Count Orlando
heard,
His heart grew soft with inner tender-
ness,
Such fervour in his bosom bred each word;
And, 'Cavalier,' he said, 'if I have less
Courteous and kind to your great worth
appear'd,
Than fits me for such gentle blood to
express,
I know I have done too little in this case;
But blame our ignorance, and this poor
place.

LXXIX

'We can indeed but honour you with
masses,
And sermons, thanksgivings, and pater-
nosters,
Hot suppers, dinners (fitting other places
In verity much rather than the cloisters);
But such a love for you my heart embraces,
For thousand virtues which your bosom
fosters,
That wheresoe'er you go I too shall be,
And, on the other part, you rest with me.

LXXX

'This may involve a seeming contradic-
tion;
But you I know are sage, and feel, and
taste,
And understand my speech, with full con-
viction.
For your just pious deeds may you be
graced
With the Lord's great reward and bene-
diction,
By whom you were directed to this
waste:
To his high mercy is our freedom due,
For which we render thanks to him and
you.

LXXXI

'You saved at once our life and soul: such
fear
The giants caused us, that the way was
lost
By which we could pursue a fit career
In search of Jesus and the saintly host;
And your departure breeds such sorrow
here,
That comfortless we all are to our cost;
But months and years you would not stay
in sloth,
Nor are you form'd to wear our sober cloth,

LXXXII

'But to bear arms, and wield the lance;
indeed,
With these as much is done as with this
cowl;

In proof of which the Scriptures you may
read.
This giant up to heaven may bear his
soul
By your compassion: now in peace pro-
ceed.
Your state and name I seek not to unroll;
But, if I'm ask'd, this answer shall be
given,
That here an angel was sent down from
heaven.

LXXXIII

'If you want armour or aught else, go in,
Look o'er the wardrobe, and take what
you choose,
And cover with it o'er this giant's skin.'
Orlando answer'd, 'If there should lie
loose
Some armour, ere our journey we begin,
Which might be turn'd to my compan-
ion's use,
The gift would be acceptable to me.'
The abbot said to him, 'Come in and see.'

LXXXIV

And in a certain closet, where the wall
Was cover'd with old armour like a
crust,
The abbot said to them, 'I give you all.'
Morgante rummaged piecemeal from
the dust
The whole, which, save one cuirass, was
too small,
And that too had the mail inlaid with
rust.
They wonder'd how it fitted him exactly,
Which ne'er has suited others so com-
pactly.

LXXXV

'Twas an immeasurable giant's, who
By the great Milo of A erante fell
Before the abbey many years ago.
The story on the wall was figured well;
In the last moment of the abbey's foe,
Who long had waged a war implacable:
Precisely as the war occur'd they drew
him,
And there was Milo as he overthrew him.

LXXXVI

Seeing this history, Count Orlando said
In his own heart, 'Oh God, who in the sky
Know'st all things! how was Milo hither
led?
Who caused the giant in this place to
die?'
And certain letters, weeping, then he read,
So that he could not keep his visage
dry,—
As I will tell in the ensuing story.
From evil keep you the high King of glory!

FRANCESCA OF RIMINI

FROM THE INFERNO OF DANTE

CANTO THE FIFTH

'The land where I was born sits by the
seas,
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was
ta'en⁵
From me, and me even yet the mode
offends.
Love, who to none beloved to love again
Remits, seized me with wish to please,
so strong,
That, as thou seest, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along,
But Caina waits for him our life who
ended:'¹¹
These were the accents utter'd by her
tongue.—
Since I first listen'd to these souls offended,
I bow'd my visage, and so kept it till—
'What think'st thou,' said the bard;
when I unbended,¹⁵
And recommenced: 'Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong
ecstasies,
Led these their evil fortune to fulfil'
And then I turn'd unto their side my eyes,
And said, 'Francesca, thy sad destinies

Have made me sorrow till the tears arise.
But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs,²²
By what and how thy love to passion
rose,
So as his dim desires to recognise?'
Then she to me: 'The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days²⁶
In misery, and that thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says.
We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancilot, how love enchain'd him
too.³²
We were alone, quite unsuspectingly.
But oft our eyes met, and our cheeks in
hue
All o'er discolour'd by that reading
were;³⁵
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;
When we read the long-sigh'd-for smile of
her,
To be thus kiss'd by such devoted lover,
He who from me can be divided ne'er
Kiss'd my mouth, trembling in the act all
over:⁴⁰
Accurs'd was the book and he who
wrote!
That day no further leaf we did un-
cover.
While thus one spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with pity's
thralls
I swoon'd, as if by death I had been
smote⁴⁵
And fell down even as a dead body falls.

DRAMAS

MANFRED

A DRAMATIC POEM

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
'Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MANFRED.
CHAMMOIS HUNTER.
ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.
MANUEL.
HERMAN.

WITCH OF THE ALPS.
ARIMANES.
NEMESIS.
THE DESTINIES.
SPIRITS, &c.

The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.

ACT I

SCENE I.—MANFRED *alone*.—*Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.*

Man. The lamp must be replenish'd,
but even then

It will not burn so long as I must watch:
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the
wise;

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the
most

Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal
truth,

The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is

A power to make these subject to itself—
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among
men—

But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before
me—

But this avail'd not:—Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no
dread,

And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes
or wishes,

Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task.—

Mysterious agency!

Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe!
Whom I have sought in darkness and in
light—

Ye, who do compass earth about, and
dwell

In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar
things—

I call upon ye by the written charm

Which gives me power upon you—Rise!

Appear! [A pause.]
They come not yet.—Now by the voice of
him

Who is the first among you—by this sign,
Which makes you tremble—by the claims
of him

Who is undying,—Rise! Appear!—
Appear! [A pause.]

If it be so—Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star con-
demn'd,

The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space; 46
By the strong curse which is upon my
soul,

The thought which is within me and around
me,

I do compel ye to my will—Appear!

[A star is seen at the darker end of the
gallery: it is stationary; and a voice
is heard singing.]

FIRST SPIRIT

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd,

From my mansion in the cloud,

Which the breath of twilight builds,

And the summer's sunset gilds

With the azure and vermillion,

Which is mix'd for my pavilion; 55

Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden:
To thine adoration bow'd,
Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
They crown'd him long ago 61
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand; 65
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass, 70
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me wouldst Thou? 75

Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT

In the blue depth of the waters,
Where the wave hath no strife,
Where the wind is a stranger,
And the sea-snake hath life, 80
Where the Mermaid is decking
Her green hair with shells,
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells;
O'er my calm Hall of Coral
The deep echo roll'd— 85
To the Spirit of Ocean
Thy wishes unfold!

FOURTH SPIRIT

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillow'd on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher; 90
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birthplace,
Thy bidding to bide—
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT

I am the Rider of the wind, 100
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast: 105
The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with
light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT

The star which rules thy destiny 110
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosom'd not a lovelier star. 115
The hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe;
Still rolling on with innate force, 120
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky! 123
And thou! beneath its influence born—
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee 129
bend
And parley with a thing like thee—
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay! with
me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains,
winds, thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of
Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are—
What wouldst thou with us, son of
mortals—say? 135

Man. Forgetfulness—

First Spirit. Of what—of whom—and
why?

Man. Of that which is within me; read
it there—

Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

Spirit. We can but give thee that which
we possess:

Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth—the whole, or portion—or a
sign 141

Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators,—each and all,
These shall be thine.

Man. Oblivion, self-oblivion
Can ye not wring from out the hidden
realms 145

Ye offer so profusely what I ask?

Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our
skill;

But—thou may'st die.

Man. Will death bestow it on me?

Spirit. We are immortal, and do not
forget;

We are eternal; and to us the past 150
Is, as the future, present. Art thou an-
swer'd?

Man. Ye mock me—but the power
which brought ye here

MANFRED

[ACT I

Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will! *(A voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.)*

The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark, ¹⁵⁴

The lightning of my being, is as bright, ---ading, and far darting as your own, And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!

Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spirit. We answer as we answer'd; our reply

Is even in thine own words.

Man. Why say ye so? ¹⁶⁰

Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,

We have replied in telling thee, the thing Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain;

Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit. Say, ¹⁶⁵

What we possess we offer; it is thine: Bethink ere thou dismiss us; ask again; Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days—

Man. Accurs'd! what have I to do with days?

They are too long already.—Hence—be-gone! ¹⁷⁰

Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

Man. No, none: yet stay—one mo-ment, ere we part,

I would behold ye face to face. I hear Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds, ¹⁷⁶

As music on the waters; and I see The steady aspect of a clear large star; But nothing more. Approach me as ye are, Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.

Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements ¹⁸¹

Of which we are the mind and principle: But choose a form—in that we will appear.

Man. I have no choice; there is no form on earth

HIDEOUS or beautiful to me. Let him, Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect ¹⁸⁶

As unto him may seem most fitting—Come!

Seventh Spirit [appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure]. Behold!

Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and thou Art not a madness and a mockery, ¹⁸⁹ I yet might be most happy, I will clasp thee, And we again will be—

[The figure vanishes.]

My heart is crush'd!

[MANFRED falls senseless.]

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass; ¹⁹⁵
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine, ²⁰⁰
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not van-
ish,
There are thoughts thou canst not ban-
ish; ²⁰⁵

By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell ²¹⁰
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been; ²¹⁵
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal. ²²¹

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare; ²²⁵
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall night leny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun, ²³⁰
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;

thy
snake, ²³⁶
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known, ²⁴⁰
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy; ²⁴⁵

By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own
heart;

By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel 250
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny; 255

Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound
thee;

O'er thy heart and brain together 260
Hath the word been pass'd—now
wither!

SCENE II

*The Mountain of the Jungfrau.—Time,
Morning.—MANFRED alone upon the
Cliffs.*

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon
me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
I lean no more on superhuman aid;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in dark-
ness, 6

It is not of my search.—My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you,
ye Mountains,

Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all 11
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my
heart.

And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme
edge

I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would
bring

My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril—yet do not recede; 21
And my brain reels—and yet my foot is
firm:

There is a power upon me which with-
holds,

And makes it my fatality to live,—
If it be life to wear within myself 25
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—

The last infirmity of evil. Ay, 29
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,
[*An eagle passes.*]

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I
should be

Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou
art gone

Where the eye cannot follow thee; but
thine 34

Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!

But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns,
we,

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit 40
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence
make

A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates, 45
And men are—what they name not to
themselves,

And trust not to each other. Hark! the
note, [The Shepherd's pipe in the
distance is heard.]

The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the saunter-
ing herd; 51

My soul would drink those echoes. Oh,
that I were

The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me! 56

Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Chamois Hunter. Even so
This way the chamois leapt: her nimble
feet

Have baffled me; my gains to-day will
scarce

Repay my break-neck travail.—What is
here?

Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath
reach'd 60

A height which none even of our moun-
taineers,

Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air

Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this dis-
tance:

I will approach him nearer.

Man. [not perceiving the other]. To be
thus— 65

Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these
blasted pines,

Wrecks of a single winter, barkless,
branchless,

A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay—

And to be thus, eternally but thus, 70
Having been otherwise! Now furrow'd o'er

MANFRED

[ACT II

With wrinkles, plough'd by moments,—
not by years,—

And hours, all tortured into ages—hours
Which I outlive!—Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws
down 75

In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and
crush me!

I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager. 81

C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from up
the valley;

I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

Man. The mists boil up around the
glaciers; clouds 85

Rise curling fast beneath me, white and
sulphury,

Like foam from the roused ocean of deep
Hell,

Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles.—I
am giddy.

C. Hun. I must approach him cautiously;
if near, 90

A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

Man. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the
shock

Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's
splinters; 95

Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist and
made

Their fountains find another channel—
thus,

Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosen-
berg—

Why stood I not beneath it?

C. Hun. Friend! have a care, 100
Your next step may be fatal!—for the love
Of him who made you, stand not on that
brink!

Man. [not hearing him]. Such would
have been for me a fitting tomb;

My bones had then been quiet in their
depth;

They had not then been strewn upon the
rocks 105

For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus
they shall be—

In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening
heavens!

Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
You were not meant for me—Earth! take
these atoms!

[As MANFRED is in act to spring from the
cliff, the CHAMOIS HUNTER seizes and
retains him with a sudden grasp.

C. Hun. Hold, madman!—though a-
weary of thy life, 110

Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty
blood:

Away with me—I will not quit my
hold.

Man. I am most sick at heart—nay,
grasp me not—

I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl
Spinning around me—I grow blind—

What art thou? 115

C. Hun. I'll answer that anon. Away
with me—

The clouds grow thicker—there—now
lean on me—

Place your foot here—here, take this staff,
and cling

A moment to that shrub—now give me
your hand,

And hold fast by my girdle—softly—
well— 120

The Chalet will be gain'd within an hour:
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer foot-
ing,

And something like a pathway, which the
torrent

Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 'tis
bravely done—

You should have been a hunter.—Follow
me. 125

[As they descend the rocks with diffi-
culty, the scene closes.

ACT II

SCENE I.—A Cottage amongst the Bernese
Alps.

MANFRED and the CHAMOIS HUNTER

C. Hun. No, no—yet pause—thou must
not yet go forth:

Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at
least;

When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
But whither?

Man. It imports not: I do know 5
My route full well, and need no further
guidance.

C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee
of high lineage—

One of the many chiefs, whose castled
crags

Look o'er the lower valleys—which of
these

May call thee lord? I only know their
portals; 10

My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old
halls,

Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to
their doors,

I know from childhood—which of these is
thine? 15

Man. No matter.

C. Hun. Well, sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;

'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thaw'd my veins among our glaciers,
now

Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly. 20

Man. Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!

Will it then never—never sink in the earth?

C. Hun. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

Man. I say 'tis blood—my blood! the pure warm stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours 25

When we were in our youth, and had one heart,

And loved each other as we should not love,

And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,

Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin, 31

Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—

The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience—

Man. Patience and patience! Hence—that word was made 35

For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
I am not of thine order.

C. Hun. Thanks to heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are
useless. 41

Man. Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Man. I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,

Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages—
ages— 46

Space and eternity—and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death—and still
unslaked!

C. Hun. Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age

Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.
Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time? 51

It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,

Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,

Innumerable atoms; and one desert, 55
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,

But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,

Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitter-

C. Hun. Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.

Man. I would I were—for then the things I see 60

Would be but a distemper'd dream.

C. Hun. What is it that thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

Man. Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—

Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free;

Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts; 66

Thy days of health, and nights of sleep;
thy toils,

By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,

With cross and garland over its green turf, 70

And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see—and then I look within—

It matters not—my soul was scorch'd already!

C. Hun. And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

Man. No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange 75

My lot with living being: I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—

In life what others could not brook to dream,

But perish in their slumber.

C. Hun. And with this—
This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil?—say not
so. 81

Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge

Upon his enemies?

Man. Oh! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me—

On those whom I best loved: I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence— 86

But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun. Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;

My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not—
But can endure thy pity. I depart— 90

'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for thee—

No words—it is thy due.—Follow me not—

MANFRED

[ACT II

I know my path—the mountain peril's past;
And once again I charge thee, follow not!
[Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE II.—*A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.*

Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes 8
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call
her. 12

[MANFRED takes some of the water into
the palm of his hand, and flings it into
the air, muttering the adjuration. After
a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises
beneath the arch of the sunbow of the
torrent.]

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daugh-
ters grow 15

To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of
youth,—

Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's
heart,

Or the rose tints, which summer's twi-
light leaves 20

Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her
heaven,—

Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends
o'er thee. 24

Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd thy serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers per-
mit 29

At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch. Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the powers which give
thee power;

I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings. 36

I have expected this—what wouldst thou
with me?

Man. To look upon thy beauty—
nothing further.

The face of the earth hath madden'd me,
and I 39

Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her—
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow,
and now

I search no further.

Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most
powerful, 45

The rulers of the invisible?

Man. A boon;
But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

Witch. I know not that; let thy lips
utter it.

Man. Well, though it torture me, 'tis
but the same;

My pang shall find a voice. From my
youth upwards 50

My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human
eyes;

The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my
powers, 55

Made me a stranger; though I wore the
form,

I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded
me

Was there but one who—but of her anon.
I said with men, and with the thoughts of
men, 60

I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the wilderness,—to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor in-
sect's wing

Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along 66

On the swift whirl of the new breaking
wave

Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving
moon, 70

The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew
dim;

Or to look, list'ning, on the scatter'd leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening
song. 74

These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one,—
Hating to be so,—cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of
death, 80

Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and
heap'd up dust,

Conclusions most forbidden. Then I
 pass'd
 The nights of years in sciences untaught,
 Save in the old time; and with time and
 toil,
 And terrible ordeal, and such penance
 As in itself hath power upon the air,
 And spirits that do compass air and earth,
 Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
 Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
 Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
 He who from out their fountain dwellings
 raised
 Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
 As I do thee;—and with my knowledge
 grew
 The thirst of knowledge, and the power
 and joy
 Of this most bright intelligence, until—
Witch. Proceed.
Man. Oh! I but thus prolong'd
 my words,
 Boasting these idle attributes, because
 As I approach the core of my heart's grief—
 But to my task. I have not named to thee
 Father or mother, mistress, friend, or
 being,
 With whom I wore the chain of human
 ties;
 If I had such, they seem'd not such to me;
 Yet there was one—
Witch. Spare not thyself—proceed.
Man. She was like me in lineaments;
 her eyes,
 Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
 Even of her voice, they said were like to
 mine;
 But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty:
 She had the same lone thoughts and
 wanderings,
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a
 mind
 To comprehend the universe: nor these
 Alone, but with them gentler powers than
 mine,
 Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had
 not;
 And tenderness—but that I had for her;
 Humility—and that I never had.
 Her faults were mine—her virtues were her
 own—
 I loved her, and destroy'd her!
Witch. With thy hand?
Man. Not with my hand, but heart,
 which broke her heart;
 It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have
 shed
 Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood
 was shed;
 I saw—and could not stanch it.
Witch. And for this—
 A being of the race thou dost despise,
 The order, which thine own would rise
 above,

Mingling with us and ours,—thou dost
 forego
 The gifts of our great knowledge, and
 shrink'st back
 To recreant mortality—Away!
Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since
 that hour—
 But words are breath—look on me in my
 sleep,
 Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by
 me!
 My solitude is solitude no more,
 But peopled with the Furies;—I have
 gnash'd
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
 Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have
 pray'd
 For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.
 I have affronted death—but in the war
 Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
 And fatal things pass'd harmless; the cold
 hand
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
 Back by a single hair, which would not
 break.
 In fantasy, imagination, all
 The affluence of my soul—which one day
 was
 A Cæsus in creation—I plunged deep,
 But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me
 back
 Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.
 I plunged amidst mankind—Forgetful-
 ness
 I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found.
 And that I have to learn; my sciences,
 My long-pursued and superhuman art,
 Is mortal here: I dwell in my despair—
 And live—and live for ever.
Witch. It may be
 That I can aid thee.
Man. To do this thy power
 Must wake the dead, or lay me low with
 them.
 Do so—in any shape—in any hour—
 With any torture—so it be the last.
Witch. That is not in my province;
 but if thou
 Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
 My bidding, it may help thee to thy
 wishes.
Man. I will not swear—Obey! and
 whom? the spirits
 Whose presence I command, and be the
 slave
 Of those who served me—Never!
Witch. Is this all?
 Hast thou no gentler answer?—Yet be-
 think thee,
 And pause ere thou rejectest.
Man. I have said it.
Witch. Enough! I may retire then—say!
Man. Retire!
 [The WITCH disappears.]

Man. [alone]. We are the fools of time
 and terror: Days 164
 Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
 Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
 In all the days of this detested yoke—
 This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
 Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick
 with pain, 169
 Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
 In all the days of past and future, for
 In life there is no present, we can number
 How few—how less than few—wherein
 the soul
 Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws
 back
 As from a stream in winter, though the
 chill 175
 Be but a moment's. I have one resource
 Still in my science—I can call the dead,
 And ask them what it is we dread to be:
 The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
 And that is nothing. If they answer
 not— 180
 The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
 Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
 From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping
 spirit
 An answer and his destiny—he slew
 That which he loved, unknowing what he
 slew, 185
 And died unpardon'd—though he call'd in
 aid
 The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
 The Arcadian Evocators to compel
 The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
 Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied
 In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.
 If I had never lived, that which I love 192
 Had still been living; had I never loved,
 That which I love would still be beautiful,
 Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
 What is she now?—a sufferer for my sins—
 A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.
 Within few hours I shall not call in vain—
 Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
 Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
 On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,
 And feel a strange cold thaw upon my
 heart. 202
 But I can act even what I most abhor,
 And champion human fears.—The night
 approaches. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—*The Summit of the Jungfrau
 Mountain.*

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and
 bright;
 And here on snows, where never human
 foot
 Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
 And leave no traces: o'er the savage sea,
 The glassy ocean of the mountain ice, 5

We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
 The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
 Frozen in a moment—a dead whirlpool's
 image:

And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
 The fretwork of some earthquake—where
 the clouds 10
 Pause to repose themselves in passing by—
 Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils;
 Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
 To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night
 Is our great festival—'tis strange they
 come not. 15

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
 Hurl'd down from the throne,
 Lay buried in torpor,
 Forgotten and lone;
 I broke through his slumbers, 20
 I shiver'd his chain,
 I leagu'd him with numbers—
 He's Tyrant again!
 With the blood of a million he'll answer
 my care,
 With a nation's destruction—his flight and
 despair. 25

Second Voice, without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
 But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
 There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
 And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his
 wreck;
 Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the
 hair, 30
 And he was a subject well worthy my care;
 A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
 But I saved him to wreak further havoc for
 me!

FIRST DESTINY, answering.

The city lies sleeping;
 The morn, to dep ore it, 35
 May dawn on it weeping:
 Sullenly, slowly,
 The black plague flew o'er it—
 Thousands lie lowly;
 Tens of thousands shall perish; 40
 The living shall fly from
 The sick they should cherish;
 But nothing can vanquish
 The touch that they die from.
 Sorrow and anguish, 45
 And evil and dread,
 Envelope a nation;
 The blest are the dead,
 Who see not the sight
 Of their own desolation; 50
 This work of a night—
 This wreck of a realm—this deed of my
 doing—
 For ages I've done, and shall still be re-
 newing!

Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves; 55
We only give to take again
The spirits of our slaves!

First Des. Welcome!—Where's Nemes-
sis?

Second Des. At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were
full. 59

Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been?
My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

Nem. I was detain'd repairing shatter'd
thrones,

Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own re-
venge; 65

Goaded the wise to madness; from the
dull

Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for them-
selves,

To weigh kings in the balance, and to
speak 70

Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstay'd the hour—mount we
our clouds! [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*The Hall of Arimanes—
Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of
Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.*

Hymn of the SPIRITS.

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and
Air!

Who walks the clouds and waters—in
his hand

The sceptre of the elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high com-
mand!

He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the
sea; 5

He speaketh—and the clouds reply in
thunder;

He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams
flee;

He moveth—earthquakes rend the
world asunder.

Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path

The comets herald through the crackling
skies; 11

And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;

To him Death pays his tribute; Life is
his,

With all its infinite of agonies— 15
And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.

First Des. Glory to Arimanes! on the
earth

His power increaseth—both my sisters did
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

Second Des. Glory to Arimanes! we
who bow 20

The necks of men, bow down before his
throne!

Third Des. Glory to Arimanes! we
await

His nod!

Nem. Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are
thine,

And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to in-
crease 25

Our power, increasing thine, demands our
care,

And we are vigilant. The late commands
Have been fulfill'd to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

A Spirit. What is here?
A mortal!—Thou most rash and fatal
wretch, 29

Bow down and worship!
Second Spirit. I do know the man—

A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!

Third Spirit. Bow down and worship,
slave!—

What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign?—Tremble, and
obey!

All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy
condemned clay,

Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

Man. I know it;

And yet ye see I kneel not.

Fourth Spirit. 'Twill be taught thee.
Man. 'Tis taught already;—many a
night on the earth,

On the bare ground, have I bow'd down
my face,

And strew'd my head with ashes; I have
known

The fulness of humiliation, for 40
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt

To my own desolation.

Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne

What the whole earth accords, beholding
not

The terror of his glory?—Crouch, I say.

Man. Bid him bow down to that which
is above him, 46

The overruling Infinite—the Maker

Who made him not for worship—let him
kneel,

And we will kneel together.

The Spirits. Crush the worm!

MANFRED

[ACT II

Tear him in pieces!—

First Des. Hence! avant!—he's mine.
Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port 52
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers
and will, 55

As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have
been such

As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we
know— 60

That knowledge is not happiness, and
science

But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all—the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power,
nor being, 65

Nor breath from the worm upwards is
exempt,
Have pierced his heart, and in their con-
sequence

Made him a thing which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be; be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath 71
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

Nem. What doth he here then?

First Des. Let him answer that.

Man. Ye know what I have known; and
without power

I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in
quest 76

Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

Nem. What wouldst thou?

Man. Thou canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead—my question is for them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will
avouch 80

The wishes of this mortal?

Ari. Yea.

Nem. Whom wouldst thou

Uncharnel?

Man. One without a tomb—call up
Astarte

NEMESIS.

Shadow! or Spirit!

Whatever thou art,

Which still doth inherit 85

The whole or a part

Of the form of thy birth,

Of the mould of thy clay,

Which return'd to the earth, 90

Re-appear to the day!

Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,

And the aspect thou worst

Redeem from the worm.

Appear!—Appear!—Appear!

Who sent thee there requires thee here!
[The Phantom of ASTARTE rises and
stands in the midst.

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom
upon her cheek;

But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural
red 100

Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd
leaf.

It is the same! Oh, God! that I should
dread

To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
Forgive me or condemn me. 105

NEMESIS.

By the power which hath broken

The grave which enthrall'd thee,

Speak to him, who hath spoken,

Or those who have call'd thee!

Man. She is silent, 110
And in that silence I am more than
answer'd.

Nem. My power extends no further.
Prince of Air!

It rests with thee alone—command her
voice.

Ari. Spirit—obey this sceptre!

Nem. Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs 115

To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest
is vain,

And we are baffled also.

Man. Hear me, hear me—
Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:

I have so much endured—so much en-
dure—

Look on me! the grave hath not changed
thee more 120

Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst
me

Too much, as I loved thee: we were not
made

To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.

Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do
bear 125

This punishment for both—that thou wilt
be

One of the blessed—and that I shall die;

For hitherto all hateful things conspire

To bind me in existence—in a life

Which makes me shrink from immortal-
ity— 130

A future like the past. I cannot rest.

I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:

I feel but what thou art, and what I am;

And I would hear yet once before I perish

The voice which was my music—Speak to
me! 135

95 For I have call'd on thee in the still night,

Startled the slumbering birds from the
hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made
the caves

Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answer'd me—many things an-
swer'd me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all. 140
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the
stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of
thee.

Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the
earth,
And never found thy likeness—Speak to
me! 145
Look on the fiends around—they feel for
me:

I fear them not, and feel for thee alone—
Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but
say—

I reckon not what—but let me hear thee
once—

This once—once more!

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!

Man. Say on, say on— 150
I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

Phan. Manfred! To-morrow ends
thine earthly ills.

Farewell!

Man. Yet one word more—am I for-
given?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. Say, shall we meet again?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. One word for mercy! Say, thou
lovest me. 155

Phan. Manfred!

[The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.]

Nem. She's gone, and will not be re-
call'd;

Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the
earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed.—This is to
be a mortal

And seek the things beyond mortality.

Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth
himself, and makes 160

His torture tributary to his will.
Had he been one of us, he would have
made

An awful spirit.

Nem. Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worship-
pers?

Man. None.

Nem. Then, for a time, farewell. 165

Man. We meet then! Where? On the
earth?—

Even as thou wilt: and for the grace ac-
corded

I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!

[Exit MANFRED.]

(Scene closes.)

ACT III

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.*

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Man. What is the hour?

Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her. All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well: 5
Thou may'st retire. *[Exit HERMAN.]*

Man. [alone]. There is a calm upon
me—

Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the moaviest,
The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should
deem

The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon',
found,

And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but
once: 15

It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new
sense,

And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

Her. My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice
craves

To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Manfred!

Man. Thanks, holy father! welcome
to these walls; 21

Thy presence honours them, and blesteth
those

Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count!—
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Man. Herman, retire.—What would
my reverend guest? 25

Abbot. Thus, without prelude:—Age
and zeal, my office,

And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neigh-
bourhood,

May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad, 30

And busy with thy name; a noble name
For centuries: may he who bears it now

Transmit it unimpaired!

Man. Proceed,—I listen.

Abbot. 'Tis said thou holdest converse
with the things 34

Which are forbidden to the search of man;

That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of
death,

Thou communest. I know that with man-
kind, 39

Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy soli-
tude

Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch
these things?

Abbot. My pious brethren—the scared
peasantry—

Even thy own vassals—who do look on
thee 45

With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in
peril.

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy:
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is
time

For penitence and pity: reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the
church to heaven. 51

what'er

I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a
mortal

To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd 55
Against your ordinances? prove and
punish!

Abbot. My son! I did not speak of
punishment,

But penitence and pardon;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the
last, 59

Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth the path
from sin

To higher hope and better thoughts; the
first

I leave to heaven,—'Vengeance is mine
alone!'

So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Man. Old man! there is no power in
holy men, 66

Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of
hell, 71

But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of heaven—can exor-
cise

From out the unbounded spirit the quick
sense

Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and
revenge 75

Upon itself; there is no future pang

Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul.

Abbot. All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place,
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity. Say on— 85
And all our church can teach thee shall be
taught;

And all we can absolve thee shall be par-
don'd.

Man. When Rome's sixth emperor was
near his last,

The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death
From senates once his slaves, a certain
soldier, 91

With show of loyal pity, would have
stanch'd

The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and
said— 94

Some empire still in his expiring glance—
'It is too late—is this fidelity?'

Abbot. And what of this?

Man. I answer with the Roman—
'It is too late!'

Abbot. It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou
no hope? 100

'Tis strange—even those who do despair
above,

Yet shape themselves some fantasy on
earth,

To which frail twig they cling, like drown-
ing men.

Man. Ay—father! I have had those
earthly visions, 104

And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,

The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither—it might be to fall;

But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which having leapt from its more dazzling
height, 110

Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
(Which casts up misty columns that be-
come

Clouds raining from there-ascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past,

My thoughts mistook themselves.

Abbot. And wherefore so? 115

Man. I could not tame my nature down;
for he

Must serve who fain would sway; and
soothe, and sue,

And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become

A mighty thing amongst the mean, and
such

The mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of
wolves.

The lion is alone, and so am I.

Abbot. And why not live and act with
other men?

Man. Because my nature was averse
from life; ¹²⁵

And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation. Like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone
simoom,

Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps
o'er

The barren sands which bear no shrubs to
blast, ¹³⁰

And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly,—such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.

Abbot. Alas! ¹³⁵
I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so
young,

I still would—

Man. Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,

Some of disease, and some insanity,
And some of wither'd or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays ¹⁴⁶
More than are number'd in the lists of
Fate,

Taking all shapes, and bearing many
names.

Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things,
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was, ¹⁵²
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

Abbot. Yet, hear me still—

Man. Old man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain: ¹⁵⁶
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,

Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy—and so—farewell.

[*Exit MANFRED.*]

Abbot. This should have been a noble
creature: he ¹⁶⁰

Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure
thoughts ¹⁶⁵

Mix'd, and contending without end or
order,—

All dormant or destructive: he will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more.
For such are worth redemption; and my
duty ¹⁶⁹

Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him—but cautiously, though
surely. [*Exit ABBOT.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Chamber.*

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on you
at sunset:

He sinks behind the mountain.

Man. Doth he so?
I will look on him. [*MANFRED advances*

to the window of the Hall.
Glorious Orb! the idol

Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons ⁵
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw
down

The erring spirits who can ne'er return.—
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops,
the hearts ¹²

Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material
God!

And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief
star! ¹⁶

Centre of many stars! which mak'st our
earth

Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or
far, ²¹

Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost
rise,

And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first
glance ²⁵

Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look; thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have
been

Of a more fatal nature. He is gone:
I follow. [*Exit MANFRED.*]

SCENE III.—*The Mountains—The Castle of Manfred at some distance—A Terrace before a Tower—Time, Twilight.*

HERMAN, MANUEL, and other Dependants
of MANFRED.

Her. 'Tis strange enough; night after
night, for years,

MANFRED

[ACT III

He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it,—
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would
giv

The fee of what I have to come these three
years,

To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel. 'Twere dangerous; 10
Content thyself with what thou know'st
already.

Her. Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and
wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt
within the castle—

How many years is't?

Manuel. Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought re-
sembles. 15

Her. There be more sons in like pre-
dicament.

But wherein do they differ?

Manuel. I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and
habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and
free,—

A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the
night 21

A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the
rocks

And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Her. Beshrew the hour, 25
But those were jocund times! I would that
such

Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

Manuel. These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I
have seen

Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her. Come, be friendly; 30
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happen'd hereabouts, by this same
tower.

Manuel. That was a night indeed! I do
remember

'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening;—yon red cloud, which
rests 36

On Eiger's pinnacle, so rested then,—
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain
snows

Began to glitter with the climbing moon;
Count Manfred was, as now, within his
tower,— 41

How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings—her, whom of all earthly
things

That lived, the only thing he seem'd to
love,— 45

As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his—

Hush! who comes here?

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. Where is your master?

Her. Yonder in the tower.

Abbot. I must speak with him.

Manuel. 'Tis impossible;
He is most private, and must not be thus
intruded on.

Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—
But I must see him.

Her. Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.

Abbot. Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprise the Count of my ap-
proach. 55

Her. We dare not.

Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

Manuel. Reverend father, stop—
I pray you pause.

Abbot. Why so?

Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further. [Exeunt. 60

SCENE IV.—Interior of the Tower.

MANFRED alone.

The stars are forth, the moon above the
tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beauti-
ful!

I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness, 6
I learn'd the language of another world.

I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall, 10
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken
arches

Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the
stars

Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber;
and 15

More near from out the Cæsars' palace
came

The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song

Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn
breach 20

Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they
stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars
dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd
battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial
hearths, 25
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan
halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay. 30
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon,
upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up, 34
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the
place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old,—
The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still
rule 40
Our spirits from their urns.
'Twas such a night!
'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest
flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. My good lord! 45
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness—all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head—could I say
heart— 50
Could I touch that, with words or prayers,
I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wander'd;
But is not yet all lost.
Man. Thou know'st me not;
My days are number'd, and my deeds re-
corded: 54
Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!
Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace
me?
Man. Not I;
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.
Abbot. What dost thou mean?
Man. Look there!
What dost thou see?
Abbot. Nothing.
Man. Look there I say,
And steadfastly;—now tell me what thou
seest? 60

Abbot. That which should shake me,
but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds; he stands be-
tween 65
Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.
Man. Thou hast no cause—he shall
not harm thee—but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into
palsy.
I say to thee—Retire!
Abbot. And I reply—
Never—till I have battled with this
fiend:— 70
What doth he here?
Man. Why—ay—what doth he here?
I did not send for him,—he is unbidden.
Abbot. Alas! lost mortal! what with
guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on
him? 75
Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven: from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell—
Avaunt!—
Man. Pronounce—what is thy mission?
Spirit. Come!
Abbot. What art thou, unknown be-
ing? answer!—speak! 80
Spirit. The genius of this mortal.—
Come! 'tis time.
Man. I am prepared for all things, but
deny
The power which summons me. Who sent
thee here?
Spirit. Thou'lt know anon—Come!
come!
Man. I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than
thine, 85
And striven with thy masters. Get thee
hence!
Spirit. Mortal! thine hour is come—
Away! I say.
Man. I knew, and know my hour is
come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I'll die as I have lived—alone. 90
Spirit. Then I must summon up my
brethren.—Rise!
[*Other Spirits rise up.*]
Abbot. Avaunt! ye evil ones!—
Avaunt! I say;
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name—
Spirit. Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and
thine order; 95
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him—Away! Away!

MANFRED

[ACT III, SCENE IV]

Man. I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye; 99
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength

To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take 103
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

Spirit. Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal? Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

Man. Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour,—that I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power, 113

Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance, daring,
And length of watching, strength of mind,
and skill 116
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth

Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand 119
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

Spirit. But thy many crimes
Have made thee—

Man. What are they to'such as thee?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes, 123
And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, that I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine: 128

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,—
Is its own origin of ill and end— 131
And its own place and time: its innate sense,

When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert. 136

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst
not tempt me;

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—

But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!— 140

The hand of death is on me—but not yours!
[*The Demons disappear.*]

Abbot. Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white—
And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat

The accents rattle: Give thy prayers to heaven—

Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus. 145

Man. 'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;

But all things swim around me, and the earth

Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well!

Give me thy hand.

Abbot. Cold—cold—even to the heart—
But yet one prayer—Alas! how fares it with thee? 150

Man. Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die. [MANFRED expires.]

Abbot. He's gone—his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight;

Whither? I dread to think—but he is gone.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

'Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ.'—HORACE.

PREFACE

THE conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the most singular government, city, and people of modern history. It occurred in the year 1355. Everything about Venice is, or was, extraordinary—her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance. The story of this Doge is to be found in all her Chronicles, and particularly detailed in the 'Lives of the Doges,' by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix. It is simply and clearly related, and is perhaps more dramatic in itself than any scenes which can be founded upon the subject.

Marino Faliero appears to have been a man of talents and of courage. I find him commander-in-chief of the land forces at the siege of Zara, where he beat the King of Hungary and his army of eighty thousand men, killing eight thousand men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check; an exploit to which I know none similar in history, except that of Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d'Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome,—at which last he received the news of his election to the dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprised of his predecessor's death and his own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podesta and captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this, honest Sanuto 'saddles him with a judgment,' as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of count, by Lorenzo Count-bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable Abate Morelli, in his 'Monumenti Veneziani di varia Letteratura,' printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Darù, Sismondi, and Laugier, nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers. Sismondi attributes the conspiracy to his *jealousy*; but I find this nowhere asserted by the national historians. Vettor Sandi, indeed, says, that 'Altri scrissero che . . . dalla gelosa suspizion di esso Doge siasi fatto (Michel Steno) staccar con violenza,' &c. &c.; but this appears to have been by no means the general opinion, nor is it alluded to by Sanuto, or by Navagero: and Sandi himself adds, a moment after, that 'per altre Veneziane memorie traspiri, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe indipendente.' The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their 'tre Capi.' The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the 'Dogaressa' herself, against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion), that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her, and for his own honour, warranted by his past services and present dignity.

I know not that the historical facts are alluded to in English, unless by Dr. Moore in his *View of Italy*. His account is false and flippant, full of stale jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause. How so acute and severe an observer of mankind as the author of *Zeluco* could wonder at this is inconceivable. He knew that a basin of water spilt on Mrs. Masham's gown deprived the Duke of Marlborough of his command, and led to the inglorious peace of Utrecht—that Louis XIV. was plunged into the most desolating wars, because his minister was nettled at his finding fault with a window, and wished to give him another occupation—that Helen lost Troy—that Lucretia expelled the Tarquins from Rome—and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain—that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome—that a single verse of Frederick II. of Prussia on the Abbé de Bernis, and a jest on Madame de Pompadour, led to the battle of Rosbach—that the elopement of Dearbhorgil with Mac Murchad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland—that a personal pique between Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons—and, not to multiply instances, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance—and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both King and Commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection, it is indeed extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent, in a fierce age, an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to favour it—

'The young man's wrath is like straw on fire,
But like red-hot steel is the old man's ire.'

'Young men soon give and soon forget affronts,
Old age is slow at both.'

Laugier's reflections are more philosophical:—'*Tale fù il fine ignominioso di un' uomo, che la sua*

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

nascità, la sua età, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi talenti per lungo tempo esercitati ne' maggiori impieghi, la sua capacità sperimentata ne' governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de' cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragi per collocarlo alla testa della repubblica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un' ingiuria leggiera insinuò nel suo cuore tal veleno che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati; serio esempio, che prova non esservi età, in cui la prudenza umana sia sicura, e che nell' uomo restano sempre passioni capaci a disonorarlo, quando non invigili sopra se stesso".

Where did Dr. Moore find that Marino Faliero begged his life? I have searched the chroniclers, and find nothing of the kind: it is true that he avowed all. He was conducted to the place of torture, but there is no mention made of any application for mercy on his part; and the very circumstance of their having taken him to the rack seems to argue anything but his having shown a want of firmness, which would doubtless have been also mentioned by those minute historians, who by no means favour him: such, indeed, would be contrary to his character as a soldier, to the age in which he lived, and at which he died, as it is to the truth of history. I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate: and they will

to then
of all others, the most i
amongst the Doges, and the Giants' Staircase where he was crowned, and disrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination; as did his fiery character and strange story. I went, in 1819, in search of his tomb more than once to the church San Giovanni e San Paolo; and, as I was standing before the monument of another family, a priest came up to me and said, 'I can show you finer monuments than that.' I told him that I was in search of that of the Faliero family, and particularly of the Doge Marino's. 'Oh,' said he, 'I will show it you'; and conducting me to the outside, pointed out a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription. He said that it had been in a convent adjoining, but was removed after the French came, and placed in its present situation; that he had seen the tomb opened at its removal; there were still some bones remaining, but no positive vestige of the decapitation. The equestrian statue of which I have made mention in the third act as before that church is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date. There were two other Doges of this family prior to Marino; Ordelafo, who fell in battle at Zara, in 1117 (where his descendant afterwards conquered the Huns), and Vital Faliero, who reigned in 1082. The family, originally from Fano, was of the most illustrious in blood and wealth in the city of once the most wealthy and still the most ancient families in Europe. The length I have gone into on this subject will show the interest I have taken in it. Whether I have succeeded or not in the tragedy, I have at least transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.

It is now four years that I have meditated this work; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero. But, perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was, besides, well advised by the late Matthew Lewis on that point, in talking with him of my intention at Venice in 1817. 'If you make him jealous,' said he, 'recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakspeare, and an exhausted subject:—stick to the old fiery Doge's natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn; and make your plot as regular as you can.' Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same counsel. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time. And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience. The sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labour to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that, even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made the attempt, and never will. But surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and Milman, and John Wilson exist. The 'City of the Plague' and the 'Fall of Jerusalem' are full of the best *materiel* for tragedy that has been seen since Horace Walpole, except passages of Ethwald and De Montfort. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the 'Castle of Otranto,' he is the 'Ultimus Romanorum,' the author of the 'Mysterious Mother,' a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.

In speaking of the drama of 'Marino Faliero,' I forgot to mention, that the desire of preserving, though still too remote, a nearer approach to unity than the irregularity, which is the reproach of the English theatrical compositions, permits, has induced me to represent the conspiracy as already formed, and the Doge acceding to it; whereas, in fact, it was of his own preparation, and that of Israel Bertuccio. The other characters (except that of the Duchess), incidents, and almost the time, which was wonderfully short for such a design in real life, are strictly historical, except that all the consultations took place in the palace. Had I followed this, the unity would have been better preserved; but I wished to produce the Doge in the full assembly of the conspirators, instead of monotonously placing him always in dialogue with the same individuals. For the real facts, I refer to the Appendix.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN
MARINO FALIERO, *Doge of Venice.*
BERTUCCIO FALIERO, *Nephew of the Doge.*
LIONI, *a Patrician and Senator.*
BENINTENDE, *Chief of the Council of Ten.*
MICHEL STENO, *One of the three Capt of the Forty.*
ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, *Chief of the Arsenal.*
PHILIP CALENDARO,
DAGOLINO,
BERTRAM,
} *Conspirators.*
} *'Signore di Notte,' one of the Officers belonging to the Republic.*
Signor of the Night,

First Citizen.
Second Citizen.
Third Citizen.
VINCENZO, } *Officers belonging to the Ducal Palace.*
PIETRO, }
BATTISTA, } *Secretary of the Council of Ten.*
Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, the Council of Ten, The Giunta, &c., &c.

WOMEN
ANGIOLINA, *Wife to the Doge.*
MARIANNA, *her Friend.*
Female Attendants, &c.

SCENE.—VENICE in the year 1355

ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.*

PIETRO speaks, in entering, to BATTISTA.

Pie. Is not the messenger return'd?

Bat. Not yet;

I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno's accusation.

Pie. Too long—at least so thinks the Doge.

Bat. How bears he
These moments of suspense?

Pie. With struggling patience.
Placed at the ducal table, cover'd o'er
With all the apparel of the state; petitions,
Despatches, judgments, acts, reprieves,
reports,

He sits as rapt in duty; but whene'er
He hears the jarring of a distant door,
Or aught that intimates a coming step,
Or murmur of a voice, his quick eye
wanders,

And he will start up from his chair, then
pause,

And seat himself again, and fix his gaze
Upon some edict; but I have observed
For the last hour he has not turned a leaf.

Bat. 'Tis said he is much moved,—and
doubtless 'twas

Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.

Pie. Ay, if a poor man: Steno's a patrician,

Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.

Bat. Then you think
He will not be judged hardly?

Pie. 'Twere enough
He be judged justly, but 'tis not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.

Bat. And here it comes.—What news,
Vincenzo?

Enter VINCENZO.

Vin. 'Tis
Decided; but as yet his doom's unknown:

I saw the president in act to seal
The parchment which will bear the Forty's
judgment
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—The Ducal Chamber.

MARINO FALIERO, *Doge; and his Nephew,*
BERTUCCIO FALIERO.

Ber. F. It cannot be but they will do
you justice.

Doge. Ay, such as the Avogadori did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty.
To try him by his peers, his own tribunal.

Ber. F. His peers will scarce protect
him; such an act

Would bring contempt on all authority.

Doge. Know you not Venice? Know
you not the Forty?

But we shall see anon.

Ber. F. [addressing VINCENZO, then entering]. How now—what tidings?

Vin. I am charged to tell his highness
that the court

Has pass'd its resolution, and that, soon
As the due forms of judgment are gone
through,

The sentence will be sent up to the Doge;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute

The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptance of their duty.

Doge. Yes—
They are wondrous dutiful, and ever
humble.

Sentence is pass'd, you say?

Vin. It is, your highness:
The president was sealing it, when I
Was call'd in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due

Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.

Ber. F. Are you aware, from aught you
have perceived,
Of their decision?

Vin. No, my lord; you know
The secret custom of the courts in Venice.

Ber. F. True; but there still is something given to guess, 26
Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch at;

A whisper, or a murmur, or an air
More or less solemn spread o'er the tribunal.

The Forty are but men—most worthy men,
And wise, and just, and cautious—this I grant— 31

And secret as the grave to which they doom

The guilty: but with all this, in their aspects—

At least in some, the juniors of the number—

A searching eye, an eye like yours, Vincenzo, 35

Would read the sentence ere it was pronounced.

Vin. My lord, I came away upon the moment,

And had no leisure to take note of that
Which pass'd among the judges, even in seeming;

My station near the accused too, Michel Steno, 40

Made me—
Doge [*abruptly*]. And how look'd he? deliver that.

Vin. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resign'd

To the decree, whate'er it were;—but lo! It comes, for the perusal of his highness.

Enter the SECRETARY of the Forty.

Sec. The high tribunal of the Forty sends 45

Health and respect to the Doge Faliero,
Chief magistrate of Venice, and requests
His highness to peruse and to approve

The sentence pass'd on Michel Steno, born
Patrician, and arraign'd upon the charge

Contain'd, together with its penalty, 51
Within the rescript which I now present.

Doge. Retire, and wait without.
Exeunt SECRETARY and VINCENZO.

Take thou this paper:
The misty letters vanish from my eyes;
I cannot fix them.

Ber. F. Patience, my dear uncle: 55
Why do you tremble thus?—nay, doubt not, all

Will be as could be wish'd.

Doge. Say on.

Ber. F. [*reading*]. 'Decreed
In council, without one dissenting voice,
That Michel Steno, by his own confession,
Guilty on the last night of Carnival 60

Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words—'

Doge. Wouldst thou repeat them?
Wouldst thou repeat them—thou, a Faliero,

Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonour'd in its chief—that chief the

prince 65
Of Venice, first of cities?—To the sentence.

Ber. F. Forgive me, my good lord; I will obey—

[*Reads*]. 'That Michel Steno be detain'd
a month

In close arrest.'

Doge. Proceed.
Ber. F. My Lord, 'tis finish'd.

Doge. How say you?—finish'd! Do I dream?—'tis false— 70

Give me the paper—[*Snatches the paper and reads*]—'Tis decreed in council

That Michael Steno'—Nephew, thine arm!

Ber. F. Nay,
Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncall'd for—

Let me seek some assistance.

Doge. Stop, sir—Stir not—
'Tis past.

Ber. F. I cannot but agree with you 75
The sentence is too slight for the offence;

It is not honourable in the Forty
To affix so slight a penalty to that

Which was a foul affront to you, and even
To them, as being your subjects; but 'tis 80

not
Yet without remedy: you can appeal

To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,

And do you right upon the bold delinquent. 85

Think you not thus, good uncle? why do you stand

So fix'd? You heed me not:—I pray you, hear me!

Doge [*dashing down the Ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew*].

Oh! that the Saracen were in St. Mark's!
Thus would I do him homage.

Ber. F. For the sake
Of Heaven and all its saints, my lord— 92

Doge. Away!
Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!

Oh, that the Huns whom I o'erthrew at
Zara 92

Were ranged around the palace!

Ber. F. 'Tis not well
In Venice' Duke to say so.

Doge. Venice' Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him, 95

That he may do me right.

Ber. F. If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty,

Remember that of man, and curb this passion.

The Duke of Venice —

Doge [interrupting him]. There is no such thing—

It is a word—nay, worse—a worthless by-word: 100

The most despised, wrong'd, outraged, helpless wretch,

Who begs his bread, if 'tis refused by one, May win it from another kinder heart:

But he, who is denied his right by those Whose place it is to do no wrong, is poorer

Than the rejected beggar—he's a slave— And that am I, and thou, and all our house, 107

Even from this hour; the meanest artisan Will point the finger, and the haughty noble

May spit upon us:—where is our redress? *Ber. F.* The law, my prince—

Doge [interrupting him]. You see what it has done; 111

I ask'd no remedy but from the law, I sought no vengeance but redress by law,

I call'd no judges but those named by law; As sovereign, I appeal'd unto my subjects,

The very subjects who had made me sovereign, 116

And gave me thus a double right to be so. The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,

Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,

The travel, toil, the perils, the fatigues, The blood and sweat of almost eighty years, 121

Were weigh'd i' the balance, 'gainst the foulest stain,

The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime

Of a rank, rash patrician—and found wanting!

And this is to be borne!

Ber. F. I say not that:— 125

In case your fresh appeal should be rejected,

We will find other means to make all even. *Doge.* Appeal again! art thou my brother's son?

A scion of the house of Faliero?

The nephew of a Doge? and of that blood Which hath already given three dukes to Venice? 131

But thou say'st well—we must be humble now.

Ber. F. My princely uncle! you are too much moved;—

I grant it was a gross offence, and grossly Left without fitting punishment: but still

This fury doth exceed the provocation, Or any provocation: if we are wrong'd,

We will ask justice; if it be denied, 138

We'll take it; but may do all this in calm—

Deep Vengeance is the daughter of deep Silence. 140

I have yet scarce a third part of your years, I love our house, I honour you, its chief,

The guardian of my youth, and its instructor—

But though I understand your grief, and enter 144

In part of your disdain, it doth appal me To see your anger, like our Adrian waves,

O'ersweep all bounds, and foam itself to air.

Doge. I tell thee—*must* I tell thee— what thy father

Would have required no words to comprehend?

Hast thou no feeling save the external sense 150

Of torture from the touch? hast thou no soul—

No pride—no passion—no deep sense of honour?

Ber. F. 'Tis the first time that honour has been doubted,

And were the last, from any other sceptic. *Doge.* You know the full offence of this born villain, 155

This creeping, coward, rank, acquitted felon,

Who threw his sting into a poisonous libel, And on the honour of—Oh God! my wife,

The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour,

Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth 160

Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,

And villainous jests, and blasphemies obscene;

While sneering nobles, in more polish'd guise,

Whisper'd the tale, and smiled upon the lie

Which made me look like them—a courteous wittol, 165

Patient—ay, proud, it may be, of dishonour.

Ber. F. But still it was a lie—you knew it false

And so did all men.

Doge. Nephew, the high Roman Said, 'Caesar's wife must not even be suspected,'

And put her from him.

Ber. F. True—but in those days—

Doge. What is it that a Roman would not suffer, 171

That a Venetian prince must bear? old Dandolo

Refused the diadem of all the Caesars, And wore the ducal cap I trample on,

Because 'tis now degraded.

Ber. F. 'Tis even so. *Doge.* It is—it is;—I did not visit on

The innocent creature thus most vilely
slander'd

Because she took an old man for her lord,
For that he had been long her father's
friend

And patron of her house, as if there were
No love in woman's heart but lust of
youth ¹⁸¹

And beardless faces;—I did not for this
Visit the villain's infamy on her,
But craved my country's justice on his
head,

The justice due unto the humblest being
Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to
him, ¹⁸⁶

Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to
him,

Who hath a name whose honour's all to
him,

When these are tainted by the accursing
breath

Of calumny and scorn.

Ber. F. And what redress ¹⁹⁰
Did you expect as his fit punishment?

Doge. Death! Was I not the sovereign
of the state—

Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey
me? ¹⁹⁴

Was I not injured as a husband? scorn'd
As man? reviled, degraded, as a prince?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason?—and he lives!
Had he instead of on the Doge's throne
Stamp'd the same brand upon a peasant's
stool, ²⁰⁰

His blood had gilt the threshold; for the
carle

Had stabb'd him on the instant.

Ber. F. Do not doubt it,
He shall not live till sunset—leave to me
The means, and calm yourself.

Doge. Hold, nephew: this
Would have sufficed but yesterday; at
present ²⁰⁵

I have no further wrath against this man.

Ber. F. What mean you? is not the
offence redoubled

By this most rank—I will not say—ac-
quittal;

For it is worse, being full acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunish'd?

Doge. It is redoubled, but not now by
him; ²¹¹

The Forty hath decreed a month's arrest—
We must obey the Forty.

Ber. F. Obey them!
Who have forgot their duty to the sove-
reign?

Doge. Why, yes;—boy, you perceive it
then at last: ²¹⁵

Whether as fellow citizen who sues
For justice, or as sovereign who com-
mands it,

They have defrauded me of both my rights
(For here the sovereign is a citizen);

But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a
hair ²²⁰

Of Steno's head—he shall not wear it long.
Ber. F. Not twelve hours longer, had
you left to me

The mode and means: if you had calmly
heard me,

I never meant this miscreant should es-
cape, ²²⁵

But wish'd you to repress such gusts of
passion,

That we more surely might devise to-
gether

His taking off.

Doge. No, nephew, he must live;
At least, just now—a life so vile as his
Were nothing at this hour; in th' olden
time ²²⁹

Some sacrifices ask'd a single victim,
Great expiations had a hecatomb.

Ber. F. Your wishes are my law: and
yet I fain

Would prove to you how near unto my
heart

The honour of our house must ever be.

Doge. Fear not; you shall have time and
place of proof: ²³⁵

But be not thou too rash, as I have been.
I am ashamed of my own anger now;

I pray you, pardon me.

Ber. F. Why, that's my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the
chief

Of commonwealths, and sovereign of
himself! ²⁴⁰

I wonder'd to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,

Although the cause—

Doge. Ay, think upon the cause—
Forget it not:—When you lie down to rest,

Let it be black among your dreams; and
when ²⁴⁵

The morn returns, so let it stand between
The sun and you, as an ill-omen'd cloud

Upon a summer day of festival:
So will it stand to me;—but speak not, stir
not,—

Leave all to me; we shall have much to do,
And you shall have a part.—But now re-
tire, ²⁵¹

'Tis fit I were alone.

Ber. F. [taking up and placing the ducal
bonnet on the table]. Ere I depart,

I pray you to resume what you have
spurn'd,

Till you can change it haply for a crown.
And now I take my leave, imploring you

In all things to rely upon my duty ²⁵⁶
As doth become your near and faithful

kinsman,

And not less loyal citizen and subject.

[Exit BERTUCCIO FALIERO.]

Doge [solus]. Adieu, my worthy nephew.—Hollow bauble!

[Taking up the ducal cap.

Beset with all the thorns that line a crown,
Without investing the insulted brow 261
With the all-swaying majesty of kings;
Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,
Let me resume thee as I would a vizor.

[Puts it on.

How my brain aches beneath thee! and
my temples 265

Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
Could I not turn thee to a diadem?

Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
Which in this hundred-handed senate
rules,

Making the people nothing, and the
prince 270

A pageant? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult—achieved for them,
Who thus repay me! Can I not requite
them?

Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day
Of my full youth, while yet my body
served 275

My soul as serves the generous steed his
lord,

I would have dash'd amongst them, asking
few

In aid to overthrow these sworn patricians;
But now I must look round for other hands

To serve this hoary head;—but it shall
plan 280

In such a sort as will not leave the task
Herculean, though as yet 'tis but a chaos

Of darkly brooding thoughts: my fancy is
In her first work, more nearly to the light

Holding the sleeping images of things
For the selection of the pausing judg-
ment.— 286

The troops are few in—

Enter VINCENTO.

Vin. There is one without
Craves audience of your highness.

Doge. I'm unwell—
I can see no one, not even a patrician—

Let him refer his business to the council.

Vin. My lord, I will deliver your reply;
It cannot much import—he's a plebeian,
The master of a galley, I believe. 293

Doge. How! did you say the patron of
a galley?

That is—I mean—a servant of the state:
Admit him, he may be on public service.

[Exit VINCENTO.]

Doge [solus]. This patron may be
sounded; I will try him. 297

I know the people to be discontented:
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse
day,

When Genoa conquer'd: they have further
cause, 300

Since they are nothing in the state, and in

The city worse than nothing—mere
machines,

To serve the nobles' most patrician plea-
sure.

The troops have long arrears of pay, oft
promised,

And murmur deeply—any hope of change
Will draw them forward: they shall pay
themselves 306

With plunder:—but the priests—I doubt
the priesthood

Will not be with us; they have hated me
Since that rash hour, when, madden'd
with the drone,

I smote the tardy bishop at Treviso, 310
Quickening his holy march; yet ne'erthe-
less,

They may be won, at least their chief at
Rome.

By some well-timed concessions; but, above
All things, I must be speedy: at my hour
Of twilight little light of life remains. 315

Could I free Venice, and avenge my
wrongs,

I had lived too long, and willingly would
sleep

Next moment with my sires; and, wanting
this,

Better that sixty of my fourscore years
Had been already where—how soon, I
care not— 320

The whole must be extinguish'd; better that
They ne'er had been, than drag me on to
be

The thing these arch-oppressors fain
would make me.

Let me consider—of efficient troops
There are three thousand posted at—

Enter VINCENTO and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

Vin. May it please 325
Your highness, the same patron whom I
spake of

Is here to crave your patience.

Doge. Leave the chamber,
Vincenzo.— *[Exit VINCENTO.]*

Sir, you may advance—what
would you?

I. Ber. Redress.

Doge. Of whom?

I. Ber. Of God and of the Doge.

Doge. Alas! my friend, you seek it of
the twain 330

Of least respect and interest in Venice.
You must address the council.

I. Ber. 'Twere in vain;
For he who injured me is one of them.

Doge. There's blood upon thy face—
how came it there?

I. Ber. 'Tis mine, and not the first I've
shed for Venice, 335

But the first shed by a Venetian hand:
A noble smote me.

Doge. Doth he live?

I. Ber. Not long—
But for the hope I had and have, that you,
My prince, yourself a soldier, will redress
Him, whom the laws of discipline and
Venice 340

Permit not to protect himself:—if not—
I say no more.

Doge. But something you would do—
Is it not so?

I. Ber. I am a man, my lord.

Doge. Why so is he who smote you.

I. Ber. He is call'd so;
Nay, more, a noble one—at least, in
Venice: 345

But since he hath forgotten that I am one,
And treats me like a brute, the brute may
turn—

'Tis said the worm will.

Doge. Say—his name and lineage?

I. Ber. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause? or
the pretext?

I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal, em-
ploy'd 350

At present in repairing certain galleys
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.
This morning comes the noble Barbaro
Full of reproof, because our artisans 354
Had left some frivolous order of his house,
To execute the state's decree: I dared
To justify the men—he raised his hand;—
Behold my blood! the first time it e'er
flow'd

Dishonourably.

Doge. Have you long time served?

I. Ber. So long as to remember Zara's
siege, 360
And fight beneath the chief who beat the
Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Fa-
liero.—

Doge. How! are we comrades?—the
state's ducal robes

Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed
you? 366

I. Ber. The late Doge; keeping still my
old command

As patron of a galley: my new office
Was given as the reward of certain scars
(So was your predecessor pleased to say):
I little thought his bounty would conduct
me 371

To his successor as a helpless plaintiff;
At least, in such a cause.

Doge. Are you much hurt?

I. Ber. Irreparably in my self-esteem.

Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being
stung at heart, 375
What would you do to be revenged on this
man?

I. Ber. That which I dare not name,
and yet will do.

Doge. Then wherefore came you here?

I. Ber. I come for justice,
Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, fill'd the ducal throne,
This blood had been wash'd out in other
blood.

Doge. You come to me for justice—
unto me!

The Doge of Venice, and I cannot give it;
I cannot even obtain it—'twas denied 385
To me most solemnly an hour ago!

I. Ber. How says your highness?

Doge. Steno is condemn'd
To a month's confinement.

I. Ber. What! the same who dared
To stain the ducal throne with those foul
words,
That have cried shame to every ear in
Venice? 390

Doge. Ay, doubtless they have echo'd
o'er the arsenal,
Keeping due time with every hammer's
clink

As a good jest to jolly artisans;
Or making chorus to the creaking oar,
In the vile tune of every galley-slave,
Who, as he sung the merry stave, exulted
He was not a shamed dotard like the Doge.

I. Ber. Is't possible? a month's im-
prisonment!
No more for Steno?

Doge. You have heard the offence,
And now you know his punishment; and
then 400

You ask redress of me! Go to the Forty,
Who pass'd the sentence upon Michel
Steno;

They'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.

I. Ber. Ah! dared I speak my feelings!
Doge. Give them breath.

Mine have no further outrage to endure.

I. Ber. Then in a word, it rests but on
your word 406

To punish and avenge—I will not say
My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,
However vile, to such a thing as I am?—
But the base insult done your state and
person. 410

Doge. You overrate my power, which
is a pageant.

This cap is not the monarch's crown; these
robes

Might move compassion, like a beggar's
rags;

Nay, more, a beggar's are his own, and
these

But lent to the poor puppet, who must
play 415

Its part with all its empire in this ermine.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be king?

Doge. Yes—of a happy p

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be sovereign l
of Venice?

Doge. Ay,
If that the people shared that sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves
To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra, 421
The poisonous heads of whose venom'd
body

Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.
I. Ber. Yet, thou wast born, and still
hast lived, patrician.

Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my
birth 425
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toil'd a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the senate;
Their good and my own honour were my
guerdon.

I have fought and bled; commanded, ay,
and conquer'd; 430

Have made and marr'd peace oft in em-
bassies,
As it might chance to be our country's
'vantage;

Have traversed land and sea in constant
duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for
Venice,

My fathers' and my birthplace, whose
dear spires, 435

Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all
this? 440

Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripp'd her bosom? Had the bird a
voice,

She'd tell thee 'twas for all her little ones.

I. Ber. And yet they made thee duke.

Doge. They made me so;
I sought it not, the flattering fetters met
me 445

Returning from my Roman embassy,
And never having hitherto refused
Toil, charge, or duty for the state, I did not,
At these late years, decline what was the
highest 449

Of all in seeming, but of all most base
In what we have to do and to endure:
Bear witness for me thou, my injured sub-
ject,

When I can neither right myself nor thee.
I. Ber. You shall do both, if you possess
the will;

And many thousands more not less op-
press'd, 455
Who wait but for a signal—will you give
it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.
I. Ber. Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life, if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.

Doge. Say on.
I. Ber. Not thou,

Nor I alone, are injured and abused, 460
Contemn'd and trampled on; but the
whole people

Groan with the strong conception of their
wrongs;

The foreign soldiers in the senate's pay
Are discontented for their long arrears;
The native mariners, and civic troops,
Feel with their friends; for who is he
amongst them 466

Whose brethren, parents, children, wives,
or sisters,

Have not partook oppression, or pollu-
tion,

From the patricians? And the hopeless
war

Against the Genoese, which is still main-
tain'd 470

With the plebeian blood, and treasure
wrong

From their hard earnings, has inflamed
them further;

Even now—but, I forget that speaking
thus,

Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death!
Doge. And suffering what thou hast
done—fear'st thou death? 475

Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten
By those for whom thou hast bled.

I. Ber. No, I will speak
At every hazard; and if Venice' Doge
Should turn delator, be the shame on him,
And sorrow too; for he will lose far more
Than I.

Doge. From me fear nothing; out with
it! 481

I. Ber. Know then, that there are met
and sworn in secret

A band of brethren, valiant hearts and
true;

Men who have proved all fortunes, and
have long

Grieved over that of Venice, and have
right 485

To do so; having served her in all climes,
And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same from those within her
walls.

They are not numerous, nor yet too few
For their great purpose; they have arms,
and means, 490

And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and
patient courage.

Doge. For what then do they pause?

I. Ber. An hour to strike.
Doge [aside]. Saint Mark's shall strike
that hour!

I. Ber. I now have placed
My life, my honour, all my earthly hopes
Within thy power, but in the firm belief
That injuries like ours, sprung from one
cause, 496

Will generate one vengeance; should it
be so,

Be our chief now—our sovereign here—
after.

Doge. How many are ye?

I. Ber. I'll not answer that
Till I am answer'd.

Doge. How, sir! do you menace?

I. Ber. No; I affirm. I have betray'd
myself; 501

But there's no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace, nor in those
Not less appalling cells, the 'leaden roofs,'
To force a single name from me of others.
The Pozzi and the Piombi were in vain;
They might wring blood from me, but
treachery never. 507

And I would pass the fearful 'Bridge of
Sighs,'

Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which
flows 510

Between the murderers and the murder'd,
washing

The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on't, and
avenge me.

Doge. If such your power and purpose,
why come here 514

To sue for justice, being in the course
To do yourself due right?

I. Ber. Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be 519
Suspected of combining to destroy it.
Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and mutter'd threats had
made me

A mark'd man to the Forty's inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily 524
It shapes its phrase, is little to be fear'd,
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
I had another reason.

Doge. What was that?

I. Ber. Some rumours that the Doge
was greatly moved

By the reference of the Avogadori
Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty
Had reach'd me. I had served you,
honour'd you, 531
And felt that you were dangerously in-
sulted,

Being of an order of such spirits, as
Requite tenfold both good and evil: 'twas
My wish to prove and urge you to redress.
Now you know all; and that I speak the
truth, 536

My peril be the proof.

Doge. You have deeply ventured;
But all must do so who would greatly win:
Thus far I'll answer you—your secret's
safe.

I. Ber. And is this all?

Doge. Unless with all intrusted,
What would you have me answer?

I. Ber. I would have you
Trust him who leaves his life in trust with
you.

Doge. But I must know your plan, your
names, and numbers;

The last may then be doubled, and the
former

Matured and strengthen'd.

I. Ber. We're enough already; 545
You are the sole ally we covet now.

Doge. But bring me to the knowledge
of your chiefs.

I. Ber. That shall be done upon your
formal pledge

To keep the faith that we will pledge to
you.

Doge. When? where?

I. Ber. This night I'll bring to your
apartment 550

Two of the principals: a greater number
Were hazardous.

Doge. Stay, I must think of this.—
What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?

I. Ber. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

I. Ber. Not were he your son. 555

Doge. Wretch! darest thou name my
son? He died in arms

At Sapienza for this faithless state.
Oh! that he were alive, and I in ashes!

Or that he were alive ere I be ashes!
I should not need the dubious aid of
strangers. 560

I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers
whom thou doubttest,

But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with
them.

Doge. The die is cast. Where is the
place of meeting?

I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and
mask'd 565

Where'er your highness pleases to direct
me,

To wait your coming, and conduct you
where

You shall receive our homage, and pro-
nounce

Upon our project.

Doge. At what hour arises

The moon?

I. Ber. Late, but the atmosphere is
thick and dusky, 570

'Tis a sirocco.

Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires;

the same,

Twin-named from the apostles John and
Paul;

A gondola, with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides
by. 575

Be there.

SCENE II]

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

I. Ber. I will not fail.

Doge. And now retire——

I. Ber. In the full hope your highness
will not falter

In your great purpose. Prince, I take my
leave. [Exit ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.]

Doge [solus]. At midnight, by the church
Saints John and Paul, 579

Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair—
To what? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin
states!

And will not my great sires leap from the
vault,

Where lie two doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them?

Would they could! 585

For I should rest in honour with the
honour'd.

Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a
name

Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles; but I will redeem it
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that's base in
Venice, 592

And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of time,
Which never spare the fame of him who
fails,

But try the Cæsar, or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert—success.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Ducal
Palace.*

ANGIOLINA (*wife of the DOGE*) and
MARIANNA.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer?

Mar. That he was
That moment summon'd to a conference.
But 'tis by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the senators embarking;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.

Ang. Would he were return'd!
He has been much disquieted of late;
And Time, which has not tamed his fiery
spirit,

Nor yet enfeebled even his mortal frame,
Which seems to me more nourish'd by
a soul 11

So quick and restless that it would con-
sume

Less hardy clay—Time has but little power
On his resentments or his griefs. Unlike
To other spirits of his order, who, 15
In the first burst of passion, pour away
Their wrath or sorrow, all things wear in
him

An aspect of eternity: his thoughts,
His feelings, passions, good or evil, all
Have nothing of old age; and his bold
brow 20

Bears but the scars of mind, the thoughts
of years,

Not their decrepitude: and he of late
Has been more agitated than his wont.
Would he were come! for I alone have
power

Upon his troubled spirit.

Mar. It is true, 25
His highness has of late been greatly
moved

By the affront of Steno, and with cause:
But the offender doubtless even now
Is doom'd to expiate his rash insult with
Such chastisement as will enforce respect
To female virtue, and to noble blood. 31

Ang. 'Twas a gross insult; but I heed it
not

For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep im-
pression 34

Which it has made upon Faliero's soul,
The proud, the fiery, the austere—austere
To all save me: I tremble when I think
To what it may conduct.

Mar. Assuredly
The Doge cannot suspect you?

Ang. Suspect me!
Why Steno dared not: when he scrawl'd
his lie, 40

Groveling by stealth in the moon's glim-
mering light,

His own still conscience smote him for the
act,

And every shadow on the walls frown'd
shame

Upon his coward calumny.

Mar. 'Twere fit
He should be punish'd grievously.

Ang. He is so.
Mar. What! is the sentence pass'd? is
he condemn'd? 46

Ang. I know not that, but he has been
detected.

Mar. And deem you this enough for
such foul scorn?

Ang. I would not be a judge in my own
cause,

Nor do I know what sense of punishment
May reach the soul of ribalds such as
Steno; 51

But if his insults sink no deeper in
The minds of the inquisitors than they
Have ruffled mine, he will, for all acquit-
tance,

Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.
Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slander'd
virtue. 56

Ang. Why, what is virtue if it needs a
victim?

Or if it must depend upon men's words?

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT II

The dying Roman said, 'twas but a name':
It were indeed no more, if human breath
Could make or mar it. 61

Mar. Yet full many a dame,
Stainless and faithful, would feel all the
wrong

Of such a slander; and less rigid ladies,
Such as abound in Venice, would be loud
And all-inexorable in their cry 65
For justice.

Ang. This but proves it is the name
And not the quality they prize: the first
Have found it a hard task to hold their
honour,

If they require it to be blazon'd forth;
And those who have not kept it, seek its
seeming 70

As they would look out for an ornament
Of which they feel the want, but not be-
cause

They think it so; they live in others'
thoughts,
And would seem honest as they must seem
fair.

Mar. You have strange thoughts for a
patrician dame. 75

Ang. And yet they were my father's;
with his name,

The sole inheritance he left.

Mar. You want none;
Wife to a prince, the chief of the Republic.

Ang. I should have sought none though
a peasant's bride, 79

But feel not less the love and gratitude
Due to my father, who bestow'd my hand
Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend,
The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge.

Mar. And with that hand did he bestow
your heart?

Ang. He did so, or it had not been be-
stow'd. 85

Mar. Yet this strange disproportion in
your years,

And, let me add, disparity of tempers,
Might make the world doubt whether such
an union

Could make you wisely, permanently
happy.

Ang. The world will think with world-
lings; but my heart 90

Has still been in my duties, which are
many,

But never difficult.

Mar. And do you love him?

Ang. I love all noble qualities which
merit

Love, and I loved my father, who first
taught me

To single out what we should love in
others, 95

And to subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
To baser passions. He bestow'd my hand
Upon Faliero: he had known him noble,

Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities
Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all 101
Such have I found him as my father said.
His faults are those that dwell in the high
bosoms

Of men who have commanded; too much
pride,

And the deep passions fiercely foster'd by
The uses of patricians, and a life 106
Spent in the storms of state and war; and
also

From the quick sense of honour, which
becomes

A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrain'd, and this I fear in him.

And then he has been rash from his youth
upwards, 111

Yet temper'd by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavish'd all its chief employs upon
him,

From his first fight to his last embassy,
From which on his return the dukedom
met him. 116

Mar. But previous to this marriage,
had your heart

Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
Such as in years had been more meet to
match

Beauty like yours? or, since, have you
ne'er seen 120

One, who, if your fair hand were still to
give,

Might now pretend to Loredano's daugh-
ter?

Ang. I answer'd your first question
when I said

I married.

Mar. And the second?

Ang. Needs no answer.

Mar. I pray you pardon, if I have
offended. 125

Ang. I feel no wrath, but some surprise:
I knew not

That wedded bosoms could permit them-
selves

To ponder upon what they now might
choose,

Or aught save their past choice.

Mar. 'Tis their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they
would 130

Now choose more wisely, could they
cancel it.

Ang. It may be so. I knew not of such
thoughts.

Mar. Here comes the Doge—shall I
retire?

Ang. It may

Be better you should quit me; he seems
rapt

In thought.—How pensively he takes his
way! 135

[Exit MARIANNA.]

Enter the DOGE and PIETRO.

Doge [musing]. There is a certain Philip Calendaro

Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
Of eighty men, and has great influence
Besides on all the spirits of his comrades:
This man, I hear, is bold and popular,
Sudden and daring, and yet secret; 'twould
Be well that he were won: I needs must
hope

That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
But fain would be—

Pie. My lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and inquire your
pleasure

To fix an hour when he may speak with
you.

Doge. At sunset.—Stay a moment—let
me see—

Say in the second hour of night.

[*Exit PIETRO.*

Ang. My lord!

Doge. My dearest child, forgive me—
why delay

So long approaching me?—I saw you not.

Ang. You were absorb'd in thought,
and he who now

Has parted from you might have words of
weight

To bear you from the senate.

Doge. From the senate?

Ang. I would not interrupt him in his
duty

And theirs.

Doge. The senate's duty! you mistake;
'Tis we who owe all service to the senate.

Ang. I thought the Duke had held com-
mand in Venice.

Doge. He shall.—But let that pass.—
We will be jocund.

How fares it with you? have you been
abroad?

The day is overcast, but the calm wave
Favours the gondolier's light skimming
oar;

Or have you held a levee of your friends?
Or has your music made you solitary?

Say—is there aught that you would will
within

The little sway now left the Duke? or aught
Of fitting splendour, or of honest pleasure,
Social or lonely, that would glad your
heart,

To compensate for many a dull hour,
wasted

On an old man oft moved with many
cares?

Speak, and 'tis done.

Ang. You're ever kind to me.

I have nothing to desire, or to request,
Except to see you oftener and calmer.

Doge. Calmer?

Ang. Ay, calmer, my good lord.—Ah,
why

Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,
And let such strong emotions stamp your
brow,

As not betraying their full import, yet
Disclose too much?

Doge. Disclose too much!—of what?
What is there to disclose?

Ang. A heart so ill

At ease.

Doge. 'Tis nothing, child.—But in the
state

You know what daily cares oppress all
those

Who govern this precarious common-
wealth;

Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within—'tis this which

makes me

More pensive and less tranquil than my
wont.

Ang. Yet this existed long before, and

never

Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me; there is something at your

heart

More than the mere discharge of public
duties,

Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have render'd light, nay, a necessity,

To keep your mind from stagnating. 'Tis
not

In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake
you,—

You, who have stood all storms and never
sunk,

And climb'd up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainting by the way, and stand

Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne'er feel

dizzy.

Were Genoa's galleys riding in the port,
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark's,

You are not to be wrought on, but would
fall,

As you have risen, with an unalter'd brow:
Your feelings now are of a different kind;

Something has stung your pride, not
patriotism.

Doge. Pride! Angiolina? Alas! none
is left me.

Ang. Yes—the same sin that overthrew
the angels,

And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature:

The vile are only vain; the great are proud.
Doge. I had the pride of honour, of your

honour,

Deep at my heart—But let us change the
theme.

Ang. Ah no!—As I have ever shared
your kindness

In all things else, let me not be shut out
From your distress: were it of public im-
port,

You know I never sought, would never
seek

To win a word from you; but feeling now
Your grief is private, it belongs to me
To lighten or divide it. Since the day
When foolish Steno's ribaldry detected
Unfix'd your quiet, you are greatly
changed,

And I would soothe you back to what you
were.

Doge. To what I was!—have you heard
Steno's sentence?

Ang. No.

Doge. A month's arrest.

Ang. Is it not enough?

Doge. Enough!—yes, for a drunken
galley slave,

Who, stung by stripes, may murmur at his
master;

But not for a deliberate, false, cool villain,
Who stains a lady's and a prince's honour
Even on the throne of his authority.

Ang. There seems to me enough in the
conviction

Of a patrician guilty of a falsehood:

All other punishment were light unto
His loss of honour.

Doge. Such men have no honour;
They have but their vile lives—and these
are spared.

Ang. You would not have him die for
this offence?

Doge. Not now:—being still alive, I'd
have him live

Long as he can; he has ceased to merit
death;

The guilty saved hath damn'd his hundred
judges,

And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.

Ang. Oh! had this false and flippant
libeller

Shed his young blood for his absurd lam-
poon,

Ne'er from that moment could this breast
have known

A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber
more.

Doge. Does not the law of Heaven say
blood for blood?

And he who *taints* kills more than he who
sheds it.

Is it the *pain* of blows, or *shame* of blows,
That makes such deadly to the sense of
man?

Do not the laws of man say blood for
honour,—

And, less than honour, for a little gold?

Say not the laws of nations blood for
treason?

Is't nothing to have fill'd these veins with
poison

For their once healthful current? is it no-
thing

To have stain'd your name and mine—the
noblest names?

Is't nothing to have brought into contempt
A prince before his people? to have fail'd

In the respect accorded by mankind

To youth in woman, and old age in man?

To virtue in your sex, and dignity

In ours?—But let them look to it who have
saved him.

Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our
enemies.

Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own?

Is there not Hell

For wrath eternal?

Ang. Do not speak thus wildly—
Heaven will alike forgive you and your
foes.

Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive
them!

Ang. And will you?

Doge. Yes, when they are in heaven!

Ang. And not till then?

Doge. What matters my forgiveness?
an old man's,

Worn out, scorn'd, spurn'd, abused; what
matters then

My pardon more than my resentment,
both

Being weak and worthless? I have lived
too long;

But let us change the argument.—My
child!

My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
The brave, the chivalrous, how little
deem'd

Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend,
That he was linking thee to shame!—Alas!

Shame without sin, for thou art faultless.
Hadst thou

But had a different husband, *any* husband
In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this
brand,

This blasphemy had never fallen upon
thee.

So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure,
To suffer this, and yet be unavenged!

Ang. I am too well avenged, for you
still love me,

And trust, and honour me; and all men
know

That you are just, and I am true: what more
Could I require, or you command?

Doge. 'Tis well,
And may be better; but whate'er betide,
Be thou at least kind to my memory.

Ang. Why speak you thus?

Doge. It is no matter why;
But I would still, whatever others think,
Have your respect both now and in my
grave.

Ang. Why should you doubt it? has it
ever fail'd?

Doge. Come hither, child; I would a word with you.

Your father was my friend; unequal fortune

Made him my debtor for some courtesies Which bind the good more firmly: when, oppress'd

With his last malady, he will'd our union, It was not to repay me, long repaid 296 Before by his great loyalty in friendship; His object was to place your orphan beauty

In honourable safety from the perils Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail A lonely and undower'd maid. I did not Think with him, but would not oppose the thought 302

Which soothed his death-bed.

Ang. I have not forgotten The nobleness with which you bade me speak

If my young heart held any preference Which would have made me happier; nor your offer 306

To make my dowry equal to the rank Of aught in Venice, and forego all claim My father's last injunction gave you.

Doge. Thus, 'Twas not a foolish dotard's vile caprice, Nor the false edge of aged appetite, 311 Which made me covetous of girlish beauty, And a young bride: for in my fieriest youth I sway'd such passions; nor was this my age

Infected with that leprosy of lust 315 Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,

Making them ransack to the very last The dregs of pleasure for their vanish'd joys;

Or buy in selfish marriage some young victim, 319

Too helpless to refuse a state that's honest, Too feeling not to know herself a wretch. Our wedlock was not of this sort; you had Freedom from me to choose, and urged in answer

Your father's choice.

Ang. I did so; I would do so In face of earth and heaven; for I have never 325

Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,

In pondering o'er your late disquietudes. *Doge.* I knew my heart would never treat you harshly;

I knew my days could not disturb you long;

And then the daughter of my earliest friend, 330

His worthy daughter, free to choose again, Wealthier and wiser, in the ripe bloom Of womanhood, more skilful to select By passing these probationary years

Inheriting a prince's name and riches, Secured, by the short penance of enduring An old man for some summers, against all That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might

Have urged against her right; my best friend's child

Would choose more fitly in respect of years, 340

And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My lord, I look'd but to my father's wishes,

Hallow'd by his last words, and to my heart

For doing all its duties, and replying With faith to him with whom I was affianced. 345

Ambitious hopes ne'er cross'd my dreams; and should

The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.

Doge. I do believe you; and I know you true:

For love, romantic love, which in my youth

I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw 350 Lasting, but often fatal, it had been

No lure for me, in my most passionate days,

And could not be so now, did such exist. But such respect, and mildly paid regard As a true feeling for your welfare, and A free compliance with all honest wishes,— A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings

As youth is apt in, so as not to check Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew 360

You had been won, but thought the change your choice;

A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct;

A trust in you; a patriarchal love, And not a doting homage; friendship, faith,— 364

Such estimation in your eyes as these Might claim, I hoped for.

Ang. And have ever had.

Doge. I think so. For the difference in our years

You knew it, choosing me, and chose: I trusted

Not to my qualities, nor would have faith In such, nor outward ornaments of nature, Were I still in my five and twentieth spring;

I trusted to the blood of Loredano 372 Pure in your veins; I trusted to the soul

God gave you—to the truths your father taught you—

To your belief in Heaven—to your mild virtues— 375

To your own faith and honour, for my own.

Ang. You have done well.—I thank you for that trust,
Which I have never for one moment ceased
To honour you the more for.

Doge. Where is honour,
Innate and precept-strengthen'd, 'tis the
rock 380
Of faith connubial: where it is not—where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood, 386
Although 'twere wed to him it covets
most:

An incarnation of the poet's god
In all his marble-chisell'd beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides, in 390
His majesty of superhuman manhood,
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is
not;

It is consistency which forms and proves it:
Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
The once fall'n woman must for ever fall;
For vice must have variety, while virtue
Stands like the sun, and all which rolls
around 397

Drinks life, and light, and glory from her
aspect.

Ang. And seeing, feeling thus this truth
in others,
(I pray you pardon me;) but wherefore
yield you 400

To the most fierce of fatal passions, and
Disquiet your great thoughts with restless
hate

Of such a thing as Steno?

Doge. You mistake me.
It is not Steno who could move me thus;
Had it been so, he should—but let that
pass. 405

Ang. What is't you feel so deeply, then,
even now?

Doge. The violated majesty of Venice,
At once insulted in her lord and laws.

Ang. Alas! why will you thus consider
it?

Doge. I have thought on't till—but
let me lead you back 410
To what I urged; all these things being
noted,

I wedded you; the world then did me
justice

Upon the motive, and my conduct proved
They did me right, while yours was all to
praise;

You had all freedom, all respect, all trust
From me and mine; and, born of those
who made 416

Princes at home, and swept kings from
their thrones

On foreign shores, in all things you ap-
pear'd

Worthy to be our first of native dames.

Ang. To what does this conduct?

Doge. To thus much—that
A miscreant's angry breath may blast it
all— 421

A villain, whom for his unbridled bearing
Even in the midst of our great festival,
I caused to be conducted forth, and taught
How to demean himself in ducal cham-
bers; 425

A wretch like this may leave upon the wall
The blighting venom of his sweltering
heart,

And this shall spread itself in general
poison;

And woman's innocence, man's honour,
pass

Into a by-word; and the doubly felon
(Who first insulted virgin modesty 431

By a gross affront to your attendant
damsels

Amidst the noblest of our dames in public)
Requite himself for his most just expulsion
By blackening publicly his sovereign's
consort, 435

And be absolved by his upright compeers.
Ang. But he has been condemn'd into
captivity.

Doge. For such as him a dungeon were
acquittal;

And his brief term of mock-arrest will pass
Within a palace. But I've done with him;
The rest must be with you.

Ang. With me, my lord?

Doge. Yes, Angiolina. Do not marvel;
I 442

Have let this prey upon me till I feel
My life cannot be long; and fain would
have you

Regard the injunctions you will find
within 445

This scroll [*Giving her a paper*].—Fear
not; they are for your advantage:

Read them hereafter at the fitting hour.

Ang. My lord, in life, and after life, you
shall

Be honour'd still by me: but may your
days

Be many yet—and happier than the
present! 450

This passion will give way, and you will be
Serene, and what you should be—what
you were.

Doge. I will be what I should be, or be
nothing;

But never more—oh! never, never more,
O'er the few days or hours which yet
await 455

The blighted old age of Faliero, shall
Sweet quiet shed her sunset! Never more

Those summer shadows rising from the
past

Of a not ill-spent nor inglorious life,
Mellowing the last hours as the night

approaches, 460

Shall soothe me to my moment of long rest.

I had but little more to ask, or hope,
Save the regards due to the blood and sweat,

And the soul's labour through which I had toil'd

To make my country honour'd. As her servant— 465

Her servant, though her chief—I would have gone

Down to my fathers with a name serene
And pure as theirs; but this has been denied me.—

Would I had died at Zara!

Ang. There you saved

The state; then live to save her still. A day,
Another day like that would be the best
Reproof to them, and sole revenge for you.

Doge. But one such day occurs within an age;

My life is little less than one, and 'tis
Enough for Fortune to have granted once,

That which scarce one more favour'd citizen 476

May win in many states and years. But why
Thus speak I? Venice has forgot that day—

Then why should I remember it?—Farewell,

Sweet Angiolina! I must to my cabinet;
There's much for me to do—and the hour

hastens. 481

Ang. Remember what you were.

Doge. It were in vain!

Joy's recollection is no longer joy,
While sorrow's memory is a sorrow still.

Ang. At least, whate'er may urge, let me implore 485

That you will take some little pause of rest:
Your sleep for many nights has been so

turbid,

That it had been relief to have awaked you,
Had I not hoped that Nature would o'er-

power

At length the thoughts which shook your slumbers thus. 490

An hour of rest will give you to your toils
With fitter thoughts and freshen'd strength.

Doge. I cannot—

I must not, if I could; for never was
Such reason to be watchful: yet a few—

Yet a few days and dream-perturbed nights, 495

And I shall slumber well—but where?—
no matter.

Adieu, my Angiolina.

Ang. Let me be

An instant—yet an instant your companion!

I cannot bear to leave you thus.

Doge. Come then,

My gentle child—forgive me; thou wert made 500

For better fortunes than to share in mine,
Now darkling in their close toward the

deep vale

Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.

When I am gone—it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that

stirring 505

Within, above, around, that in this city
Will make the cemetaries populous

As e'er they were by pestilence or war,—
When I am nothing, let that which I was

Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips, 510

A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing
Which would not have thee mourn it, but

remember.

Let us begone, my child—the time is pressing. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A retired spot near the Arsenal.*

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CALENDARO.

Cal. How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint?

I. Ber. Why, well.

Cal. Is't possible! will he be punish'd?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. With what? a mulct or an arrest?

I. Ber. With death!

Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,

Such as I counsel'd you, with your own hand. 5

I. Ber. Yes; and for one sole draught of hate, forego

The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of

exile;

Leaving one scorpion crush'd, and thousands stinging 9

My friends, my family, my countrymen!
No, Calendaro; these same drops of blood,

Shed shamefully, shall have the whole of his

For their requital—but not only his;
We will not strike for private wrongs

alone: 14

Such are for selfish passions and rash men,

But are unworthy a tyrannicide.

Cal. You have more patience than I care to boast.

Had I been present when you bore this insult,

I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath.

I. Ber. Thank Heaven you were not—
all had else been marr'd: 21

As 'tis, our cause looks prosperous still.

Cal. You saw

The Doge—what answer gave he?
I. Ber. That there was

No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Cal. I told you so before, and that 'twas
idle 25

To think of justice from such hands.

I. Ber. At least,
It lull'd suspicion, showing confidence.

Had I been silent, not a sbirro but

Had kept me in his eye, as meditating

A silent, solitary, deep revenge. 30

Cal. But wherefore not address you to
the Council?

The Doge is a mere puppet, who can
scarce

Obtain right for himself. Why speak to
him?

I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal. Why not now?

I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight.

Get your musters, 35

And bid our friends prepare their com-
panies:

Set all in readiness to strike the blow,
Perhaps in a few hours; we have long

waited

For a fit time—that hour is on the dial,

It may be, of to-morrow's sun: delay

Beyond may breed us double danger. See

That all be punctual at our place of meet-
ing,

And arm'd, excepting those of the Sixteen,
Who will remain among the troops to wait

The signal.

Cal. These brave words have breathed
new life 45

Into my veins; I'm sick of these protracted

And hesitating councils: day on day

Crawl'd on, and added but another link

To our long fetters, and some fresher

wrong 49

Inflicted on our brethren or ourselves,

Helping to swell our tyrants' bloated
strength.

Let us but deal upon them, and I care not
For the result, which must be death or

freedom!

I'm weary to the heart of finding neither.

I. Ber. We will be free in life or death!
the grave 55

Is chainless. Have you all the musters
ready?

And are the sixteen companies completed
To sixty?

Cal. All save two, in which there are
Twenty-five wanting to make up the num-
ber.

I. Ber. No matter; we can do without.
Whose are they? 60

Cal. Bertram's and old Soranzo's, both
of whom

Appear less forward in the cause than we
are.

I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you
deem all those

Who are not restless cold: but there exists

Often in concentrated spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not
doubt them. 66

Cal. I do not doubt the elder; but in
Bertram

There is a hesitating softness, fatal

To enterprise like ours: I've seen that man

Weep like an infant o'er the misery 70

Of others, heedless of his own, though
greater;

And in a recent quarrel I beheld him

Turn sick at sight of blood, although a
villain's.

I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart
and eyes,

And feel for what their duty bids them do.

I have known Bertram long; there doth
not breathe 76

A soul more full of honour.

Cal. It may be so:

I apprehend less treachery than weakness;

Yet as he has no mistress, and no wife

To work upon his milkiness of spirit,

He may go through the ordeal; it is well

He is an orphan, friendless save in us:

A woman or a child had made him less

Than either in resolve.

I. Ber. Such ties are not
For those who are call'd to the high des-
tinies 85

Which purify corrupted commonwealths;

We must forget all feelings save the one,

We must resign all passions save our pur-
pose,

We must behold no object save our
country,

And only look on death as beautiful, 90

So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,

And draw down freedom on her evermore.

Cal. But if we fail—

I. Ber. They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their
gore;

Their heads may sodden in the sun; their

limbs 95

Be strung to city gates and castle walls—

But still their spirit walks abroad. Though

years

Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,

They but augment the deep and sweeping

thoughts

Which overpower all others, and conduct

The world at last to freedom. What were

we, 101

If Brutus had not lived? He died in giving

Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson—

A name which is a virtue, and a soul

Which multiplies itself throughout all

time, 105

When wicked men wax mighty, and a state

Turns servile. He and his high friend were

styled

'The last of Romans!' Let us be the

first

Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman
sires. 109

Cal. Our fathers did not fly from Attila
Into these isles, where palaces have sprung
On banks redeem'd from the rude ocean's
ooze,

To own a thousand despots in his place.
Better bow down before the Hun, and call
A Tartar lord, than these swoln silkworms
masters! 115

The first at least was man, and used his
sword

As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a
word

As with a spell.

I. Ber. It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness;
To-day I have not been the usual round,
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care: these
orders

In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have 125
Lent a fair colour to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtained in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet.—Are all supplied
with arms? 130

Cal. All who were deem'd trustworthy:
there are some

Whom it were well to keep in ignorance
Till it be time to strike, and then supply
them;

When in the heat and hurry of the hour
They have no opportunity to pause, 135
But needs must on with those who will
surround them.

I. Ber. You have said well. Have you
remark'd all such?

Cal. I've noted most; and caused the
other chiefs

To use like caution in their companies.
As far as I have seen, we are enough 140

To make the enterprise secure, if 'tis
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 'tis begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

I. Ber. Let the Sixteen meet at the
wonted hour,

Except Soranzo, Nicoletto Blondo, 145
And Marco Giuda, who will keep their
watch

Within the arsenal, and hold all ready,
Expectant of the signal we will fix on.

Cal. We will not fail.

I. Ber. Let all the rest be there;
I have a stranger to present to them. 150

Cal. A stranger! doth he know the
secret?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. And have you dared to peril your
friends' lives

On a rash confidence in one we know not?

I. Ber. I, have risk'd no man's life ex-
cept my own—

Of that be certain: he is one who may
Make our assurance doubly sure, accord-
ing 156

His aid; and if reluctant, he no less
Is in our power: he comes alone with me,
And cannot 'scape us; but he will not
swerve.

Cal. I cannot judge of this until I know
him: 160

Is he one of our order?

I. Ber. Ay, in spirit,
Although a child of greatness; he is one—
Who would become a throne, or over-
throw one—

One who has done great deeds, and seen
great changes; 164

No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;
Valiant in war, and sage in council: noble
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet
wary;

Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once stirr'd and baffled, as he has
been

Upon the tenderest points, there is no
Fury 170

In Grecian story like to that which wrings
His vitals with her burning hands, till he
Grows capable of all things for revenge;
And add too, that his mind is liberal,
He sees and feels the people are oppress'd,
And shares their sufferings. Take him all
in all, 176

We have need of such, and such have need
of us.

Cal. And what part would you have
him take with us?

I. Ber. It may be, that of chief.

Cal. What! and resign
Your own command as leader?

I. Ber. Even so.
My object is to make your cause end well.

And not to push myself to power. Ex-
perience, 182

Some skill, and your own choice, had
mark'd me out

To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear: if I have
found such 185

As you yourselves shall own more worthy,
think you

That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,
Stake our deep interest on my single
thoughts, 189

Rather than yield to one above me in
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,

Know your friend better; but you all shall
judge.

Away! and let us meet at the fix'd hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.

Cal. Worthy Bertuccio, I have known
you ever 195

Trusty and brave, with head and heart to plan

What I have still been prompt to execute.
For my own part, I seek no other chief;
What the rest will decide I know not, but
I am with you, as I have ever been, 200
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us meet.
[Exeunt.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Scene, the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it.—A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.*

Enter the DOGE alone, disguised.

Doge [solus]. I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream 5

Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!

Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee

A lazar-house of tyranny: the task 9
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not;
And therefore was I punish'd, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane! 15

Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow

The floor which doth divide us from the dead,

Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,

Moulder'd into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes, 20

When what is now a handful shook the earth—

Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house!

Vault where two Doges rest—my sires! who died

The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labours, wounds, and state 26

I have inherited,—let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,

And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me!

I call them up, and them and thee to witness 30

What it hath been which put me to this task—

Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,

Their mighty name dishonour'd all in me,
Not by me, but by the ungrateful nobles
We fought to make our equals, not our lords: 35

And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
Who perish'd in the field, where I since conquer'd,

Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice' foes, there offer'd up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance? 40

Spirits! smile down upon me; for my cause
Is yours, in all life now can be of yours,—
Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,

And in the future fortunes of our race!
Let me but prosper, and I make this city
Free and immortal, and our house's name
Worthier of what you were, now and hereafter. 47

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

I. Ber. Who goes there?

Doge. A friend to Venice.

I. Ber. 'Tis he.
Welcome, my lord,—you are before the time.

Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly. 50

I. Ber. Have with you.—I am proud and pleased to see

Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all dispell'd?

Doge. Not so—but I have set my little left

Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
When I first listen'd to your treason.—
Start not! 56

That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
Though I be wrought on to commit them.
When

I heard you tempt your sovereign, and
forbore 60

To have you dragg'd to prison, I became
Your guiltiest accomplice: now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.

I. Ber. Strange words, my lord, and most unmerited;

I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. We!—We!—no matter—you have earn'd the right 66

To talk of us.—But to the point.—If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, render'd free

And flourishing, when we are in our graves,
Conducts her generations to our tombs.

And makes her children with their little hands 71

Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not, 75
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel;—thou
No less than he who was thy sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.

I. Ber. 'Tis not the moment to consider
thus, 81

Else I could answer.—Let us to the meeting,
Or we may be observed in lingering here.

Doge. We are observed, and have been.
I. Ber. We observed!

Let me discover—and this steel—

Doge. Put up;
Here are no human witnesses: look there—
What see you?

I. Ber. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.

Doge. That warrior was the sire
Of my sire's fathers, and that statue was
Decreed to him by the twice rescued
city:— 91

Think you that he looks down on us or no?

I. Ber. My lord, these are mere fanta-
sies; there are
No eyes in marble.

Doge. But there are in Death.
I tell thee, man, there is a spirit in 95
Such things that acts and sees, unseen,
though felt;

And, if there be a spell to stir the dead,
'Tis in such deeds as we are now upon.

Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as
mine

Can rest, when he, their last descendant
chief, 100

Stands plotting on the brink of their pure
graves

With stung plebeians?

I. Ber. It had been as well
To have pondered this before,—ere you
embark'd

In our great enterprise.—Do you repent?
Doge. No—but I *feel*, and shall do to
the last. 105

I cannot quench a glorious life at once
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,
And take men's lives by stealth, without
some pause:

Yet doubt me not; it is this very feeling,
And knowing *what* has wrung me to be
thus, 110

Which is your best security. There's not
A roused mechanic in your busy plot

So wrong'd as I, so fall'n, so loudly call'd
To his redress: the very means I am forced
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,

That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
Which I must do to pay them back for
theirs. 117

I. Ber. Let us away—hark—the hour
strikes.

Doge. On—on—
It is our knell, or that of Venice—On.

I. Ber. Say rather, 'tis her freedom's
rising peal 120

Of triumph.—This way—we are near the
place. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*The House where the Con-
spirators meet.*

DAGOLINO, DORO, BERTRAM, FEDELE
TREVISANO, CALENDARO, ANTONIO
DELLE BENDE, &c. &c.

Cal. [entering]. Are all here?

Dag. All with you; except the three
On duty, and our leader Israel,
Who is expected momentarily.

Cal. Where's Bertram?

Ber. Here!

Cal. Have you not been able to
complete

The number wanting in your company?

Ber. I had mark'd out some; but I have
not dared 6

To trust them with the secret, till assured
That they were worthy faith.

Cal. There is no need
Of trusting to their faith; *who*, save our-
selves

And our more chosen comrades, is aware
Fully of our intent? they think themselves

Engaged in secret to the Signory, 12
To punish some more dissolute young
nobles

Who have defied the law in their excesses;
But once drawn up, and their new swords
well flesh'd 15

In the rank hearts of the more odious
senators,

They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
The example of their chiefs, and I for one

Will set them such, that they for very
shame 20

And safety will not pause till all have
perish'd.

Ber. How say you? *all*!

Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?

Ber. I spare? 1
I have no power to spare. I only question'd,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked
men

There might be some, whose age and
qualities 25

Might mark them out for pity.

Cal. Yes, such pity
As when the viper hath been cut to pieces,
The separate fragments quivering in the
sun,

In the last energy of venomous life,
Deserve and have. Why, I should think as
soon 30

Of pitying some particular fang which
made

One in the jaw of the swoln serpent, as
Of saving one of these: they form but links
Of one long chain; one mass, one breath,
one body;

They eat, and drink, and live, and breed
together,

Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert,—

So let them die as *one*!

Dag. Should *one* survive,
He would be dangerous as the whole; it is
not

Their number, be it tens or thousands, but
The spirit of this aristocracy
Which must be rooted out; and if there
were

A single shoot of the old tree in life,
'Twould fasten in the soil, and spring
again

To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm!

Cal. Look to it well, 45
Bertram; I have an eye upon thee.

Ber. Who
Distrusts me?

Cal. Not I; for if I did so,
Thou wouldst not now be there to talk of
trust:

It is thy softness, not thy want of faith,
Which makes thee to be doubted.

Ber. You should know 50
Who hear me, who and what I am; a man
Roused like yourselves to overthrow oppression;

A kind man, I am apt to think, as some
Of you have found me; and if brave or no,
You, Calendaro, can pronounce, who
have seen me

Put to the proof; or, if you should have
doubts,

I'll clear them on your person!

Cal. You are welcome,
When once our enterprise is o'er, which
must not

Be interrupted by a private brawl.

Ber. I am no brawler; but can bear myself 60

As far among the foe as any he
Who hears me; else why have I been
selected

To be of your chief comrades? but no less
I own my natural weakness; I have not
Yet learn'd to think of indiscriminate
murder

Without some sense of shuddering; and
the sight

Of blood which spouts through hoary
scalps is not

To me a thing of triumph, nor the death
Of men surprised a glory. Well—too well
I know that we must do such things on
those

Whose acts have raised up such avengers;
but

If there were some of these who could be
saved

From out this sweeping fate, for our own
sakes

And for our honour, to take off some stain
Of massacre, which else pollutes it wholly,
I had been glad; and see no cause in this
For sneer, nor for suspicion!

Dag. Calm thee, Bertram,
For we suspect thee not, and take good
heart.

It is the cause, and not our will, which asks
Such actions from our hands: we'll wash
away

All stains in Freedom's fountain!

*Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and the DOGE,
disguised.*

Dag. Welcome, Israel.
Consp. Most welcome.—Brave Bertuccio,
thou art late—

Who is this stranger?

Cal. It is time to name him.
Our comrades are even now prepared to
greet him

In brotherhood, as I have made it known
That thou wouldst add a brother to our
cause,

Approved by thee, and thus approved by all,
Such is our trust in all thine actions. Now
Let him unfold himself.

I. Ber. Stranger, step forth!
[*The Doge discovers himself.*

Consp. To arms!—we are betray'd—it
is the Doge!

Down with them both! our traitorous
captain, and

The tyrant he hath sold us to.

Cal. [*drawing his sword*]. Hold! hold!
Who moves a step against them dies.

Hold! hear
Bertuccio—What! are you appall'd to see

A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you?—Israel, speak; what means
this mystery?

I. Ber. Let them advance and strike at
their own bosoms,

Ungrateful suicides! for on our lives
Depend their own, their fortunes, and
their hopes.

Doge. Strike!—If I dreaded death, a
death more fearful

Than any your rash weapons can inflict,
I should not now be here: Oh, noble
Courage!

The eldest born of Fear, which makes you
brave

Against this solitary hoary head!

See the bold chiefs, who would reform a
state
And shake down senates, mad with wrath
and dread

At sight of one patrician! Butcher me!
You can, I care not.—Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of? look
upon them!

Cal. Faith! he hath shamed us, and
deservedly. 110
Was this your trust in your true chief
Bertuccio,
To turn your swords against him and his
guest?

Sheathe them, and hear him.

I. Ber. I disdain to speak.
They might and must have known a heart
like mine 114

Incapable of treachery; and the power
They gave me to adopt all fitting means
To further their design was ne'er abused.
They might be certain that whoe'er was
brought

By me into this council had been led
To take his choice—as brother, or as
victim. 120

Doge. And which am I to be? your
actions leave
Some cause to doubt the freedom of the
choice.

I. Ber. My lord, we would have perish'd
here together,
Had these rash men proceeded; but, be-
hold,

They are ashamed of that mad moment's
impulse, 125

And droop their heads; believe me, they
are such

As I described them.—Speak to them.

Cal. Ay, speak;
We are all listening in wonder.

I. Ber. [addressing the conspirators].
You are safe,

Nay, more, almost triumphant—listen
then, 129

And know my words for truth.

Doge. You see me here,
As one of you hath said, an old, unarm'd,
Defenceless man; and yesterday you saw
me

Presiding in the hall of ducal state,
Apparent sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters—the patri-
cians.

Why I was there you know, or think you
know;

Why I am *here*, he who hath been most
wrong'd,

He who among you hath been most in-
sulted, 140

Outraged, and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him
here?

You know my recent story, all men know
it.

And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgment to heap scorn on
scorn. 146

But spare me the recital—it is here,
Here at my heart the outrage—but my
words,

Already spent in unavailing complaints,
Would only show my feebleness the more,
And I come here to strengthen even the
strong, 151

And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman's weapons; but I need not
urge you.

Our private wrongs have sprung from
public vices,

In this—I cannot call it commonwealth,
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince
nor people, 156

But all the sins of the old Spartan state
Without its virtues—temperance and va-
lour.

The Lords of Lacedæmon were true sol-
diers, 159

But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved;
Although dress'd out to head a pageant, as
The Greeks of yore made drunk their
slaves to form

A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this monster of a state,

This mockery of a government, this
spectre, 166

Which must be exorcised with blood,—
and then

We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights, 170

Proportion'd like the columns to the
temple,

Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
And making firm the whole with grace and
beauty, 173

So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry.

In operating this great change, I claim
To be one of you—if you trust in me;

If not, strike home,—my life is com-
promised, 178

And I would rather fall by freemen's hands
Than live another day to act the tyrant

As delegate of tyrants: such I am not,
And never have been—read it in our
annals;

I can appeal to my past government
In many lands and cities; they can tell you
If I were an oppressor, or a man 185

Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.
Haply had I been what the senate sought,

A thing of robes and trinkets, dizen'd out
To sit in state as for a sovereign's picture;

A popular scourge, a ready sentence-
signer, 190

A stickler for the Senate and 'the Forty',
A sceptic of all measures which had not

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT III]

The sanction of 'the Ten', a council-fawner,

A tool, a fool, a puppet,—they had ne'er Foster'd the wretch who stung me. What

I suffer 195
Has reach'd me through my pity for the people;

That many know, and they who know not yet

Will one day learn: meantime I do devote, Whate'er the issue, my last days of life—

My present power such as it is, not that Of Doge, but of a man who has been great

Before he was degraded to a Doge, 202
And still has individual means and mind;

I stake my fame (and I had fame)—my breath—

(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh) My heart, my hope, my soul, upon this cast! 206

Such as I am, I offer me to you And to your chiefs; accept me or reject me,—

A Prince who fain would be a citizen Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so. 210

Cal. Long live Faliero!—Venice shall be free!

Consp. Long live Faliero! I. Ber. Comrades! did I well?

Is not this man a host in such a cause? Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place

For exultation. Am I one of you? 215
Cal. Ay, and the first among us, as thou hast been

Of Venice—be our general and chief. Doge. Chief!—general!—I was general

at Zara, And chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, prince in Venice: 219

I cannot stoop—that is, I am not fit To lead a band of—patriots: when I lay

Aside the dignities which I have borne, 'Tis not to put on others, but to be

Mate to my fellows—but now to the point; Israel has stated to me your whole plan—

'Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it, 226
And must be set in motion instantly.

Cal. E'en when thou wilt. Is it not so, my friends?

I have disposed all for a sudden blow; When shall it be then?

Doge. At sunrise. Ber. So soon?

Doge. So soon?—so late—each hour accumulates 231

Peril on peril, and the more so now Since I have mingled with you;—know

you not The Council, and 'the Ten'? the spies, the eyes

Of the patricians dubious of their slaves, And now more dubious of the prince they have made one? 236

I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly, Full to the Hydra's heart—its heads will

follow. Cal. With all my soul and sword, I yield assent; 239

Our companies are ready, sixty each, And all now under arms by Israel's order;

Each at their different place of rendezvous, And vigilant, expectant of some blow;

Let each repair for action to his post! And now, my lord, the signal?

Doge. When you hear The great bell of St. Mark's, which may

not be 246
Struck without special order of the Doge

(The last poor privilege they leave their prince),

March on Saint Mark's! I. Ber. And there?—

Doge. By different routes Let your march be directed, every sixty

Entering a separate avenue, and still 251
Upon the way let your cry be of war

And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn Discern'd before the port; form round the

palace, Within whose court will be drawn out in arms 255

My nephew and the clients of our house, Many and martial; while the bell tolls on,

Shout ye, 'Saint Mark!—the foe is on our waters!'

Cal. I see it now—but on, my noble lord. Doge. All the patricians flocking to the

Council, 260
(Which they dare not refuse, at the dread signal

Pealing from out their patron saint's proud tower),

Will then be gather'd in unto the harvest, And we will reap them with the sword for

sickle. If some few should be tardy or absent

them, 265
'Twill be but to be taken faint and single,

When the majority are put to rest. Cal. Would that the hour were come!

we will not scotch, But kill.

Ber. Once more, sir, with your pardon, I Would now repeat the question which I

ask'd 270
Before Bertuccio added to our cause

This great ally who renders it more sure, And therefore safer, and as such admits

Some dawn of mercy to a portion of Our victims—must all perish in this

slaughter? 275
Cal. All who encounter me and mine, be sure,

The mercy they have shown, I show. Consp. All! all!

Is this a time to talk of pity? when Have they e'er shown, or felt, or feign'd it?

I. Ber.
This false compassion is a folly, and
Injustice to thy comrades and thy cause!
Dost thou not see, that if we single out
Some for escape, they live but to avenge
The fallen? and how distinguish now the
innocent

From out the guilty? all their acts are
one— 285

A single emanation from one body,
Together knit for our oppression! 'Tis
Much that we let their children live; I
doubt 288

If all of these even should be set apart:
The hunter may reserve some single cub
From out the tiger's litter, but whoe'er
Would seek to save the spotted sire or dam,
Unless to perish by their fangs? however,
I will abide by Doge Faliero's counsel:
Let him decide if any should be saved.

Doge. Ask me not—tempt me not with
such a question—
Decide yourselves. 296

I. Ber. You know their private virtues
Far better than we can, to whom alone
Their public vices, and most foul oppres-
sion,

Have made them deadly; if there be a-
mongst them 300
One who deserves to be repeal'd, pro-
nounce.

Doge. Dolfino's father was my friend,
and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro
shared

My Genoese embassy: I saved the life
Of Veniero—shall I save it twice? 305
Would that I could save them and Venice
also!

All these men, or their fathers, were my
friends
Till they became my subjects; then fell
from me

As faithless leaves drop from the o'er-
blown flower, 309

All left me a lone blighted thorny stalk,
Which, in its solitude, can shelter nothing;
So, as they let me wither, let them perish.

Cal. They cannot co-exist with Venice's
freedom!

Doge. Ye, though you know and feel
our mutual mass 314

Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant
What fatal poison to the springs of life,
To human ties, and all that's good and
dear,

Lurks in the present institutes of Venice:
All these men were my friends: I loved
them, they

Requited honourably my regards; 320
We served and fought; we smiled and wept
in concert;

We revell'd or we sorrow'd side by side;
We made alliances of blood and marriage;

We grew in years and honours fairly,—till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them choose me for their prince, and then
farewell! 326

Farewell all social memory! all thoughts
In common! and sweet bonds which link
old friendships,

When the survivors of long years and
actions,

Which now belong to history, soothe the
days 330

Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
And never meet, but each beholds the
mirror

Of half a century on his brother's brow,
And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
Flit round them whispering of the days
gone by, 335

And seeming not all dead, as long as two
Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious
band,

Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on
marble— 340

Oimé! Oimé!—and must I do this deed?

I. Ber. My lord, you are much moved:
it is not now

That such things must be dwelt upon.
Doge. Your patience

A moment—I recede not: mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour they made me Doge, the

Doge THEY made me—
Farewell the past! I died to all that had been,
Or rather they to me: no friends, no kind-
ness,

No privacy of life—all were cut off:
They came not near me, such approach
gave umbrage; 350

They could not love me, such was not the
law;

They thwarted me, 'twas the state's policy;
They baffled me, 'twas a patrician's duty;
They wrong'd me, for such was to right the
state;

They could not right me, that would give
suspicion; 355

So that I was a slave to my own subjects;
So that I was a foe to my own friends;
Begirt with spies for guards, with robes for
power,

With pomp for freedom, gaolers for a
council,

Inquisitors for friends, and hell for life!
I had one only fount of quiet left, 361

And that they poison'd! My pure house-
hold gods

Were shiver'd on my hearth, and o'er their
shrine

Sate grinning Ribaldry and sneering Scorn.
I. Ber. You have been deeply wrong'd,
and now shall be 365

Nobly avenged before another night.

Doge. I had borne all—it hurt me, but I bore it—

Till this last running over of the cup
Of bitterness—until this last loud insult,
Not only unredress'd, but sanction'd;
then, 370

And thus, I cast all further feelings from me—

The feelings which they crush'd for me,
long, long

Before, even in their oath of false allegiance!

Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured

Their friend and made a sovereign, as boys make 375

Playthings, to do their pleasure—and be broken!

I from that hour have seen but senators
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge,

Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear;
They dreading he should snatch the

tyranny 380
From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants.

To me, then, these men have no *private* life,
Nor claim to ties they have cut off from

others;
As senators for arbitrary acts

Amenable, I look on them—as such 385
Let them be dealt upon.

Cal. And now to action!

Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be

The last night of mere words: I'd fain be doing!

Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me wakeful!

I. Ber. Disperse then to your posts: be firm and vigilant; 390

Think on the wrongs we bear, the rights we claim.

This day and night shall be the last of peril!

Watch for the signal, and then march. I go
To join my band: let each be prompt to

marshal
His separate charge: the Doge will now

return 395
To the palace to prepare all for the blow.
We part to meet in freedom and in glory!

Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage to you

Shall be the head of Steno on this sword!

Doge. No; let him be reserved unto the last, 400

Nor turn aside to strike at such a prey,
Till nobler game is quarried: his offence

Was a mere ebullition of the vice,
The general corruption generated 404

By the foul aristocracy: he could not—
He dared not in more honourable days

Have risk'd it. I have merged all private wrath

Against him in the thought of our great purpose.

A slave insults me—I require his punishment

From his proud master's hands; if he refuse it, 410

The offence grows his, and let him answer it.
Cal. Yet, as the immediate cause of the

alliance
Which consecrates our undertaking more,

I owe him such deep gratitude, that fain I would repay him as he merits; may I?

Doge. You would but lop the hand, and I the head; 416

You would but smite the scholar, I the master;

You would but punish Steno, I the senate.
I cannot pause on individual hate,

In the absorbing, sweeping, whole revenge,
Which, like the sheeted fire from heaven,

must blast 421
Without distinction, as it fell of yore,
Where the Dead Sea hath quench'd two

cities' ashes.

I. Ber. Away, then, to your posts! I but remain

A moment to accompany the Doge 425
To our late place of tryst, to see no spies
Have been upon the scout, and thence I

hasten
To where my allotted band is under arms.

Cal. Farewell, then,—until dawn!

I. Ber. Success go with you!

Consp. We will not fail—Away! My lord, farewell! 430

[*The Conspirators salute the DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and retire, headed by PHILIP CALENDARO. The DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO remain.*]

I. Ber. We have them in the toil—it cannot fail!

Now thou'rt indeed a sovereign, and wilt make

A name immortal greater than the greatest:
Free citizens have struck at kings ere now;

Cæsars have fallen, and even patrician hands 435

Have crush'd dictators, as the popular steel
Has reach'd patricians: but, until this hour,

What prince has plotted for his people's freedom? 438

Or risk'd a life to liberate his subjects?

For ever, and for ever, they conspire
Against the people, to abuse their hands

To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
Against the fellow nations, so that yoke

On yoke, and slavery and death may whet,
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan!

Now, my lord, to our enterprise;—'tis great, 446

And greater the reward; why stand you rapt?

A moment back, and you were all impatience!

Doge. And is it then decided! must they die?
I. Ber. Who?
Doge. My own friends by blood and courtesy,⁴⁵⁰
 And many deeds and days—the senators?
I. Ber. You pass'd their sentence, and it is a just one.
Doge. Ay, so it seems, and so it is to you;
 You are a patriot, plebeian Gracchus—
 The rebels' oracle, the people's tribune—
 I blame you not—you act in your vocation;⁴⁵⁶
 They smote you, and oppress'd you, and despised you,
 So they have me; but you ne'er spake with them;
 You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt,
 You never had their wine-cup at your lips;
 You grew not up with them, nor laugh'd, nor wept,⁴⁶¹
 Nor held a revel in their company;
 Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claim'd their smile
 In social interchange for yours, nor trusted
 Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have;⁴⁶⁵
 These hairs of mine are grey, and so are theirs,
 The elders of the Council: I remember
 When all our locks were like the raven's wing,
 As we went forth to take our prey around
 The isles wrung from the false Mahometan;⁴⁷⁰
 And can I see them dabbled o'er with blood?
 Each stab to them will seem my suicide.
I. Ber. Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy
 A child; if you are not in second childhood,
 Call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor⁴⁷⁵
 Thus shame yourself and me. By heavens!
 I'd rather
 Forego even now, or fail in our intent,
 Than see the man I venerate subside
 From high resolves into such shallow weakness!
 You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both⁴⁸⁰
 Your own and that of others; can you shrink then
 From a few drops from veins of hoary vampires,
 Who but give back what they have drain'd from millions?
Doge. Bear with me! Step by step, and blow on blow,
 I will divide with you; think not waver:
 Ah! no; it is the certainty of all⁴⁸⁶
 Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.

But let these last and lingering thoughts have way,
 To which you only and the night are conscious,
 And both regardless: when the hour arrives,⁴⁹⁰
 'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
 Which shall unpeople many palaces,
 And hew the highest genealogic trees
 Down to the earth, strew'd with their bleeding fruit,⁴⁹⁴
 And crush their blossoms into barrenness:
This will I—must I—have I sworn to do,
 Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;
 But still I quiver to behold what I
 Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.
I. Ber. Re-man your breast; I feel no such remorse,⁵⁰⁰
 I understand it not: why should you change?
 You acted, and you act, on your free will.
Doge. Ay, there it is—you feel not, nor do I,
 Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
 A thousand lives, and killing, do no murder;⁵⁰⁵
 You feel not—you go to this butcher-work
 As if these high-born men were steers for shambles:
 When all is over, you'll be free and merry,
 And calmly wash those hands incarnadine;
 But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows
 In this surpassing massacre, shall be,
 Shall see and feel—oh God! oh God! 'tis true,⁵¹²
 And thou dost well to answer that it was
 'My own free will and act,' and yet you err,
 For I will do this! Doubt not—fear not; I
 Will be your most unmerciful accomplice!
 And yet I act no more on my free will,
 Nor my own feelings—both compel me back;
 But there is hell within me and around,
 And like the demon who believes and trembles⁵²⁰
 Must I abhor and do. Away! away!
 Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
 To gather the retainers of our house.
 Doubt not, St. Mark's great bell shall wake
 all Venice,⁵²⁴
 Except her slaughtered senate: ere the sun
 Be broad upon the Adriatic there
 Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
 The roar of waters in the cry of blood!
 I am resolved—come on.
I. Ber. With all my soul!
 Keep a firm rein upon these bursts of passion;⁵³⁰
 Remember what these men have dealt to thee,
 And that this sacrifice will be succeeded

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT IV

By ages of prosperity and freedom
To this unshackled city: a true tyrant
Would have depopulated empires, nor
Have felt the strange compunction which
hath wrung you 536
To punish a few traitors to the people.
Trust me, such were a pity more misplaced
Than the late mercy of the state to Steno.
Doge. Man, thou hast struck upon the
chord which jars 540
All nature from my heart. Hence to our
task! [Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Palazzo of the Patrician LIONI.*
LIONI *laying aside the mask and cloak*
which the Venetian Nobles wore in
public, attended by a Domestic.

Lioni. I will to rest, right weary of this
revel,
The gayest we have held for many moons,
And yet, I know not why, it cheer'd me not;
There came a heaviness across my heart,
Which, in the lightest movement of the
dance, 5
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand
united
Even with the lady of my love, oppress'd
me,
And through my spirit chill'd my blood,
until
A damp like death rose o'er my brow; I
strove
To laugh the thought away, but 'twould
not be; 10
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian
wave
Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
Daashing against the outward Lido's bul-
wark: 15
So that I left the festival before
It reach'd its zenith, and will woo my pil-
low
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetful-
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and
light 19
The lamp within my chamber.
Ant. Yes, my lord:
Command you no refreshment?
Lioni. Nought, save sleep,
Which will not be commanded. Let me
hope it, [Exit ANTONIO.
Though my breast feels too anxious; I will
try
Whether the air will calm my spirits: 'tis
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which
blew 25
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon hath brighten'd. What
a stillness! [Goes to an open lattice.

And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver
lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried
walls, 30
Spread over the reluctant gloom which
haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which show'd all things, but nothing as
they were. 34
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful
mirror,
Prank'd forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet
hide, 41
Believed itself forgotten, and was fool'd.
There Youth, which needed not, nor
thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and
health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome
press 45
Of flush'd and crowded wassailers, and
wasted
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was
pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise
streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which
should not 49
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.
The music, and the banquet, and the wine,
The garlands, the rose odours, and the
flowers,
The sparkling eyes, and flashing orna-
ments,
The white arms and the raven hair, the
braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the
necklace, 55
An India in itself, yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze
and heaven;
The many-twinkling feet so small and
sylph-like,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry 60
Of the fair forms which terminate so well—
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments—art and
nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that
drank
The sight of beauty as the parched pilgrim's
On Arab sands the false mirage, which
offers 66
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone. Around me are the stars and
waters—

Worlds mirror'd in the ocean, goodlier
sight 69

Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue
depths,

Softened with the first breathings of the
spring;

The high moon sails upon her beauteous
way, 74

Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly
fronts,

Fraught with the orient spoil of many
marbles,

Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear'd up from out the waters, scarce less
strangely 81

Than those more massy and mysterious
giants

Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that
have 84

No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.

The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,

And cautious opening of the casement,
showing 90

That he is not unheard; while her young
hand,

Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in

The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his
heart 95

Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; the
dash

Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,

And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for
verse; 100

Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering
spire,

Are all the sights and sounds which here
pervade

The ocean-born and earth-commanding
city—

How sweet and soothing is this hour of
calm! 105

I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased
away

Those horrid bodements which, amidst
the throng,

I could not dissipate: and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence, 109

Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this.—

[A knocking is heard from without.

Hark! what is that? or who at such a
moment?

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. My lord, a man without, on urgent
business,

Implores to be admitted.
Lioni. Is he a stranger?

Ant. His face is muffled in his cloak,
but both 115

His voice and gestures seem familiar to
me;

I craved his name, but this he seem'd
reluctant

To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni. 'Tis a strange hour, and a suspi-
cious bearing! 120

And yet there is slight peril: 'tis not in
Their houses noble men are struck at; still,

Although I know not that I have a foe
In Venice, 'twill be wise to use some
caution.

Admit him, and retire; but call up quickly
Some of thy fellows, who may wait with-
out.— 126

Who can this man be?
[Exit ANTONIO, and returns with BER-
TRAM muffled.

Ber. My good lord Lioni,
I have no time to lose, nor thou,—dismiss
This menial hence; I would be private with
you.

Lioni. It seems the voice of Bertram—
Go, Antonio. [Exit ANTONIO.

Now, stranger, what would you at such an
hour? 131

Ber. [discovering himself]. A boon, my
noble patron; you have granted

Many to your poor client, Bertram; add
This one, and make him happy.

Lioni. Thou hast known me
From boyhood, ever ready to assist thee
In all fair objects of advancement, which
Besem one of thy station; I would promise
Ere thy request was heard, but that the
hour, 138

Thy bearing, and this strange, and hurried
mode

Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit
Hath some mysterious import—but say
on— 141

What has occurred, some rash and sudden
broil?—

A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab?—
Mere things of every day; so that thou hast
not

Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;
But then thou must withdraw, for angry
friends 146

And relatives, in the first burst of venge-
ance,

Are things in Venice deadlier than the
laws.

Ber. My lord, I thank you; but—
Lioni. But what? You have not
 Raised a rash hand against one of our
 order? ¹⁵⁰

If so, withdraw and fly, and own it not;
 I would not slay—but then I must not save
 thee!

He who has shed patrician blood—

Ber. I come
 To save patrician blood, and not to shed it!
 And thereunto I must be speedy, for
 Each minute lost may lose a life; since
 Time

Has changed his slow scythe for the two-
 edged sword, ¹⁵⁷

And is about to take, instead of sand,
 The dust from sepulchres to fill his hour-
 glass!—

Go not thou forth to-morrow!

Lioni. Wherefore not?
 What means this menace?

Ber. Do not seek its meaning,
 But do as I implore thee;—stir not forth,
 Whate'er be stirring; though the roar of
 crowds—

The cry of women, and the shrieks of
 babes—

The groans of men—the clash of arms—
 the sound ¹⁶⁵

Of rolling drum, shrill trumpet, and hollow
 bell,

Peal in one wild alarm!—Go not forth,
 Until the tocsin's silent, nor even then
 Till I return!

Lioni. Again, what does this mean?
Ber. Again, I tell thee, ask not; but by
 all ¹⁷⁰

Thou holdest dear on earth or heaven—by
 all

The souls of thy great fathers, and thy
 hope

To emulate them, and to leave behind
 Descendants worthy both of them and
 thee—

By all thou hast of bless'd in hope or
 memory— ¹⁷⁵

By all thou hast to fear here or hereafter—
 By all the good deeds thou hast done to
 me,

Good I would now repay with greater
 good,

Remain within—trust to thy household
 gods, ¹⁷⁹

And to my word for safety, if thou dost
 As I now counsel—but if not, thou art
 lost!

Lioni. I am indeed already lost in won-
 der;

Surely thou ravest! what have I to dread?
 Who are my foes? or if there be such, why
 Art thou leagued with them? thou! or if so
 leagued, ¹⁸⁵

Why comest thou to tell me at this hour,
 And not before?

Ber. I cannot answer this.
 Wilt thou go forth despite of this true
 warning?

Lioni. I was not born to shrink from
 idle threats, ¹⁸⁹

The cause of which I know not: at the hour
 Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
 Be found among the absent.

Ber. Say not so!
 Once more, art thou determined to go
 forth?

Lioni. I am. Nor is there aught which
 shall impede me!

Ber. Then, Heaven have mercy on thy
 soul!—Farewell! ^[Going.]

Lioni. Stay—there is more in this than
 my own safety ¹⁹⁶

Which makes me call thee back; we must
 not part thus:

Bertram, I have known thee long.
Ber. From childhood, signor,

You have been my protector; in the days
 Of reckless infancy, when rank forgets,

Or, rather, is not yet taught to remember,
 Its cold prerogative, we play'd together;

Our sports, our smiles, our tears, were
 mingled oft;

My father was your father's client, I
 His son's scarce less than foster-brother;

years ²⁰⁵

Saw us together—happy, heart-full hours!
 Oh God! the difference 'twixt those hours
 and this!

Lioni. Bertram, 'tis thou who hast for-
 gotten them.

Ber. Nor now, nor ever; whatsoe'er be-
 tide,

I would have saved you: when to man-
 hood's growth ²¹⁰

We sprung, and you, devoted to the state,
 As suits your station, the more humble

Bertram
 Was left unto the labours of the humble,
 Still you forsook me not; and if my for-
 tunes

Have not been towering, 'twas no fault of
 him ²¹⁵

Who ofttimes rescued and supported me,
 When struggling with the tides of circum-
 stance,

Which bear away the weaker: noble blood
 Ne'er mantled in a nobler heart than thine

Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Ber-
 tram. ²²⁰

Would that thy fellow senators were like
 thee!

Lioni. Why, what hast thou to say
 against the senate?

Ber. Nothing.
Lioni. I know that there are angry
 spirits ²²³

And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason,
 Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out
 Muffled to whisper curses to the night;

Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians,
And desperate libertines who brawl in
taverns;

Thou herdest not with such: 'tis true, of late
I have lost sight of thee, but thou wert
wont 230

To lead a temperate life, and break thy bread
With honest mates, and bear a cheerful
aspect.

What hath come to thee? in thy hollow eye
And hueless cheek, and thine unquiet
motions,

Sorrow and shame and conscience seem at
war 235

To waste thee.

Ber. Rather shame and sorrow light
On the accursed tyranny which rides
The very air in Venice, and makes men
Madden as in the last hours of the plague
Which sweeps the soul deliriously from
life! 240

Lioni. Some villains have been tamper-
ing with thee, Bertram;
This is not thy old language, nor own
thoughts;

Some wretch has made thee drunk with
disaffection:

But thou must not be lost so; thou wert
good 244

And kind, and art not fit for such base acts
As vice and villainy would put thee to:
Confess—confide in me—thou know'st
my nature. 247

What is it thou and thine are bound to do,
Which should prevent thy friend, the only
son

Of him who was a friend unto thy father,
So that our good-will is a heritage 251

We should bequeath to our posterity
Such as ourselves received it, or aug-
mented;

I say, what is it thou must do, that I
Should deem thee dangerous, and keep thee
house 255

Like a sick girl?

Ber. Nay, question me no further:
I must be gone.—

Lioni. And I be murder'd!—say,
Was it not thus thou said'st, my gentle
Bertram?

Ber. Who talks of murder? what said I
of murder?

'Tis false! I did not utter such a word.

Lioni. Thou didst not; but from out thy
wolfish eye, 261
So changed from what I knew it, there
glares forth

The gladiator. If my life's thine object,
Take it—I am unarm'd,—and then away!
I would not hold my breath on such a
tenure 265

As the capricious mercy of such things
As thou and those who have set thee to thy
taskwork.

Ber. Sooner than spill thy blood, I peril
mine;

Sooner than harm a hair of thine, I place
In jeopardy a thousand heads, and some
As noble, nay, even nobler than thine own.

Lioni. Ay, is it even so? Excuse me,
Bertram; 272

I am not worthy to be singled out
From such exalted hecatombs—who are
they

That *are* in danger, and that *make* the
danger? 275

Ber. Venice, and all that she inherits,
are

Divided like a house against itself,
And so will perish ere to-morrow's twi-
light!

Lioni. More mysteries, and awful ones!

But now,

Or thou, or I, or both, it may be, are
Upon the verge of ruin; speak once out,
And thou art safe and glorious; for 'tis
more 282

Glorious to save than slay, and slay i' the
dark too—

Fie, Bertram! that was not a craft for thee!
How would it look to see upon a spear

The head of him whose heart was open to
thee, 286

Borne by thy hand before the shuddering
people?

And such may be my doom; for here I
swear,

Whate'er the peril or the penalty
Of thy denunciation, I go forth, 290

Unless thou dost detail the cause, and
show

The consequence of all which led thee here!

Ber. Is there no way to save thee?
minutes fly,

And thou art lost!—*thou!* my sole bene-
factor,

The only being who was constant to me
Through every change. Yet, make me not
a traitor! 296

Let me save thee—but spare my honour!

Lioni.

Where
Can lie the honour in a league of murder?
And who are traitors save unto the
state?

Ber. A league is still a compact, and
more binding 300

In honest hearts when words must stand
for law;

And in my mind, there is no traitor like
He whose domestic treason plants the
poniard

Within the breast which trusted to his
truth. 304

Lioni. And who will strike the steel to
mine?

Ber.

Not I;

I could have wound my soul up to all
things

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT IV

Save this. *Thou* must not die! and think
how dear

Thy life is, when I risk so many lives,
Nay, more, the life of lives, the liberty
Of future generations, *not* to be 310
The assassin thou miscall'st me:—once,
once more

I do adjure thee, pass not o'er thy threshold!
Lioni. It is in vain—this moment I go
forth.

Ber. Then perish Venice rather than my
friend!

I will disclose—ensnare—betray—des-
troy— 315

Oh, what a villain I become for thee!

Lioni. Say, rather, thy friend's saviour
and the state's!—

Speak—pause not—all rewards, all
pledges for

Thy safety and thy welfare; wealth such as
The state accords her worthiest servants;
nay, 320

Nobility itself I guarantee thee,

So that thou art sincere and penitent.

Ber. I have thought again: it must not
be—I love thee—

Thou know'st it—that I stand here is the
proof.

Not least though last; but having done my
duty 325

By thee, I now must do it by my country!
Farewell, I meet no more in life!—fare-
well!

Lioni. What, ho!—Antonio—Pedro—
to the door!

See that none pass—arrest this man!—

*Enter ANTONIO and other armed Domestics,
who seize BERTRAM.*

Lioni [continues]. Take care

He hath no harm; bring me my sword and
cloak, 330

And man the gondola with four oars—
quick—

[Exit ANTONIO.

We will unto Giovanni Gradenigo's,
And send for Marc Cornaro:—fear not,

Bertram; 333

This needful violence is for thy safety,
No less than for the general weal.

Ber. Where wouldst thou

Bear me a prisoner?
Lioni. Firstly to 'the Ten';

Next to the Doge.

Ber. To the Doge?

Lioni. Assuredly:

Is he not chief of the state?

Ber. Perhaps at sunrise—

Lioni. What mean you?—but we'll
know anon.

Ber. Art sure?

Lioni. Sure as all gentle means can
make; and if 340

They fail, you know 'the Ten' and their
tribunal,

And that St. Mark's has dungeons, and
the dungeons

A rack.

Ber. Apply it then before the dawn

Now hastening into heaven.—One more
such word,

And you shall perish piecemeal, by the
death 345

You think to doom to me.

Re-enter ANTONIO.

Ant. The bark is ready,

My lord, and all prepared.

Lioni. Look to the prisoner.

Bertram, I'll reason with thee as we go
To the Magnifico's, sage Gradenigo.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The Ducal Palace.—The
Doge's Apartment.*

*The DOGE and his Nephew BERTUCCIO
FALIERO.*

Doge. Are all the people of our house
in muster?

Ber. F. They are array'd, and eager for
the signal,

Within our palace precincts at San Polo.
I come for your last orders.

Doge. It had been

As well had there been time to have got
together, 5

From my own fief, Val di Marino, more
Of our retainers—but it is too late.

Ber. F. Methinks, my lord, 'tis better as
it is:

A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion; and, though fierce

and trusty, 10

The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long main-
tain'd

The secret discipline we need for such
A service, till our foes are dealt upon.

Doge. True; but when once the signal
has been given, 15

These are the men for such an enterprise;
These city slaves have all their private bias

Their prejudice *against* or *for* this noble,
Which may induce them to o'erdo or spare

Where mercy may be madness; the fierce
peasants, 20

Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord with-
out

Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,

A Gradenigo or a Foscari; 25

They are not used to start at those vain
names,

Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;
A chief in armour is their Suzerain,

And not a thing in robes.

Ber. F. We are enough;
And for the dispositions of our clients
Against the senate I will answer.

Doge. Well,
The die is thrown; but for a warlike service,
Done in the field, commend me to my
peasants:

They made the sun shine through the host
of Huns

When sallow burghers slunk back to their
tents,

And cower'd to hear their own victorious
trumpet.

If there be small resistance you will find
These citizens all lions, like their standard;
But if there's much to do, you'll wish,
with me,

A band of iron rustics at our backs. 40
Ber. F. Thus thinking, I must marvel
you resolve

To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge. Such blows
Must be struck suddenly or never. When
I had o'ermaster'd the weak false remorse
Which yearn'd about my heart, too fondly
yielding 45

A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro, 50
I know not well the courage or the faith:
To-day might find 'mongst them a traitor
to us,

As yesterday a thousand to the senate;
But once in, with their hilts hot in their
hands,

They must *on* for their own sakes: one
stroke struck, 55

And the mere instinct of the first-born Cain,
Which ever lurks somewhere in human
hearts,

Though circumstance may keep it in
abeyance,

Will urge the rest on like to wolves; the
sight

Of blood to crowds begets the thirst of
more, 60

As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel;
And you will find a harder task to quell
Than urge them when they have com-
menced, but *till*

That moment, a mere voice, a straw, a
shadow,

Are capable of turning them aside.— 65
How goes the night?

Ber. F. Almost upon the dawn.
Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the
bell.

Are the men posted?

Ber. F. By this time they are;
But they have orders not to strike, until

They have command from you through
me in person.

Doge. 'Tis well.—Will the morn never
put to rest

These stars which twinkle yet o'er all the
heavens?

I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to

Resolve to cleanse this commonwealth
with fire, 75

Now leaves my mind more steady. I have
wept

And trembled at the thought of this dread
duty;

But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,

As doth the pilot of an admiral galley:
Yet (wouldst thou think it, kinsman?) it

hath been 81
A greater struggle to me, than when na-
tions

Beheld their fate merged in the approach-
ing fight,

Where I was leader of a phalanx, where
Thousands were sure to perish—Yes, to

spill 85
The rank polluted current from the veins
Of a few bloated despots needed more

To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal, than to face

The toils and dangers of a life of war,
Ber. F. It gladdens me to see your for-
mer wisdom 91

Subdue the furies which so wrung you ere
You were decided.

Doge. It was ever thus
With me; the hour of agitation came

In the first glimmerings of a purpose, when
Passion had too much room to sway; but

in 96
The hour of action I have stood as calm
As were the dead who lay around me: this

They knew who made me what I am, and
trusted

To the subduing power which I preserved
Over my mood, when its first burst was

spent. 101
But they were not aware that there are
things

Which make revenge a virtue by reflection,
And not an impulse of mere anger; though

The laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured
souls 105

Oft do a public right with private wrong,
And justify their deeds unto themselves.—

Methinks the day breaks—is it not so?
look,

Thine eyes are clear with youth;—the air
puts on 109

A morning freshness, and, at least to me,
The sea looks greyer through the lattice.

Ber. F. True,
Doge. The morn is dappling in the sky.

Away then!

See that they strike without delay, and with
The first toll from St. Mark's, march on the
palace

With all our house's strength; here I will
meet you; ¹¹⁵

The Sixteen and their companies will move
In separate columns at the self-same moment:

Be sure you post yourself at the great gate:
I would not trust 'the Ten' except to us—
The rest, the rabble of patricians, may
Glut the more careless swords of those
leagued with us. ¹²¹

Remember that the cry is still 'Saint Mark!
The Genoese are come—ho! to the rescue!
Saint Mark and Liberty!'—Now—now to
action!

Ber. F. Farewell then, noble uncle! we
will meet ¹²⁵

In freedom and true sovereignty, or never!
Doge. Come hither, my Bertuccio—one
embrace;

Speed, for the day grows broader; send me
soon

A messenger to tell me how all goes
When you rejoin our troops, and then
sound—sound ¹³⁰

The storm-bell from St. Mark's!
[*Exit BERTUCCIO FALIERO.*

Doge [solus]. He is gone,
And on each footstep moves a life. 'Tis
done.

Now the destroying angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey, ¹³⁵
And for a moment, poised in middle air,
Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak.

Thou day!

That slowly walk'st the waters! march—
march on—

I would not smite i' the dark, but rather see
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea
waves! ¹⁴¹

I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply
too,

With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flow'd too, but victo-
rious,

Now thou must wear an unmix'd crimson;
no ¹⁴⁵

Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this?
I, who was named Preserver of the City?
I, at whose name the million's caps were
flung ¹⁵¹

Into the air, and cries from tens of thou-
sands

Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me
blessings,

And fame, and length of days—to see this
day? ¹⁵⁴

But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their
crown;

I will resign a crown, and make the state
Renew its freedom—but oh! by what
means? ¹⁶⁰

The noble end must justify them. What
Are a few drops of human blood? 'tis false,
The blood of tyrants is not human; they,
Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until 'tis time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous.—Oh
world! ¹⁶⁶

Oh men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish
crime?

And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword
superfluous? ¹⁷⁰

And I, upon the verge of th' unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me?—
I must not ponder this. ^[A pause.]

Hark! was there not

A murmur as of distant voices, and
The tramp of feet in martial unison?

What phantoms even of sound our wishes
raise! ¹⁷⁶

It cannot be—the signal hath not rung—
Why pauses it? My nephew's messenger
Should be upon his way to me, and he
Himself perhaps even now draws grating
back ¹⁸⁰

Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower
portal,

Where swings the sullen huge oracular
bell,

Which never knells but for a princely
death,

Or for a state in peril, peeling forth
Tremendous bodements; let it do its office,
And be this peal its awfulest and last
Sound till the strong tower rock!—What!
silent still?

I would go forth, but that my post is here,
To be the centre of re-union to
The oft discordant elements which form
Leagues of this nature, and to keep com-
pact ¹⁹¹

The wavering of the weak, in case of con-
flict;

For if they should do battle, 'twill be here,
Within the palace, that the strife will
thicken:

Then here must be my station, as becomes
The master-mover.—Hark! he comes—
he comes, ¹⁹⁶

My nephew, brave Bertuccio's messen-
ger.—

What tidings? Is he marching? hath he
sped?

They here!—all's lost—yet will I make
an effort.

Enter a SIGNOR OF THE NIGHT, with Guards, &c. &c.

Sig. Doge, I arrest thee of high treason!
Doge. Me!

Thy prince, of treason?—Who are they
that dare ²⁰¹
Cloak their own treason under such an
order?

Sig. [showing his order]. Behold my
order from the assembled Ten.

Doge. And where are they, and why
assembled? no

Such council can be lawful, till the prince
Preside there, and that duty's mine: on
thine ²⁰⁶

I charge thee, give me way, or marshal me
To the council chamber.

Sig. Duke! it may not be:
Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,

But sitting in the convent of Saint
Saviour's. ²¹⁰

Doge. You dare to disobey me, then?
Sig. I serve

The state, and needs must serve it faithfully;
My warrant is the will of those who rule it.

Doge. And till that warrant has my signature
It is illegal, and, as now applied, ²¹⁵

Rebellious. Hast thou weigh'd well thy
life's worth,

That thus you dare assume a lawless function?

Sig. 'Tis not my office to reply, but act—
I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide.

Doge [aside]. I must gain time. So that
the storm-bell sound, ²²¹

All may be well yet.—Kinsman, speed—
speed—speed!—

Our fate is trembling in the balance, and
Woe to the vanquish'd! be they prince and
people,

Or slaves and senate—
[The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.

Lo! it sounds—it tolls!
[Aloud]. Hark, Signor of the Night! and
you, ye hirelings, ²²⁶

Who wield your mercenary staves in fear,
It is your knell—Swell on, thou lusty peal!

Now, knaves, what ransom for your lives?
Sig. Confusion!

Stand to your arms, and guard the door—
all's lost ²³⁰

Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath miss'd his path or purpose,

Or met some unforeseen and hideous obstacle.

Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with
me. [Exit part of the Guard.

Doge. Wretch! if thou wouldst have thy
vile life, implore it; ²³⁶

It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.
Ay, send thy miserable ruffians forth;
They never shall return.

Sig. So let it be!
They die then in their duty, as will I.

Doge. Fool! the high eagle flies at
nobler game ²⁴¹

Than thou and thy base myrmidons,—live
on,

So thou provok'st not peril by resistance,
And learn (if souls so much obscured can
bear ²⁴⁴

To gaze upon the sunbeams) to be free.
Sig. And learn thou to be captive. It
hath ceased, [The bell ceases to toll.

The traitorous signal, which was to have set
The bloodhound mob on their patrician
prey—

The knell hath rung, but it is not the
senate's! ²⁴⁹

Doge [after a pause]. All's silent, and
all's lost!

Sig. Now, Doge, denounce me
As rebel slave of a revolted council!

Have I not done my duty?
Doge. Peace, thou thing!

Thou hast done a worthy deed, and earn'd
the price

Of blood, and they who use thee will re-
ward thee.

But thou wert sent to watch, and not to
prate, ²⁵⁵

As thou said'st even now—then do thine
office,

But let it be in silence, as behoves thee,
Since, though thy prisoner, I am thy prince.

Sig. I did not mean to fail in the respect
Due to your rank: in this I shall obey you.

Doge [aside]. There now is nothing left
me save to die; ²⁶¹

And yet how near success! I would have
fallen,

And proudly, in the hour of triumph, but
To miss it thus!—

*Enter other SIGNORS OF THE NIGHT, with
BERTUCCIO FALIERO prisoner.*

2nd Sig. We took him in the act
Of issuing from the tower, where, at his
order, ²⁶⁵

As delegated from the Doge, the signal
Hath thus begun to sound.

1st Sig. Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured?

2nd Sig. They are—besides, it matters
not; the chiefs

Are all in chains, and some even now on
trial— ²⁷⁰

Their followers are dispersed, and many
taken.

Ber. F. Uncle!
Doge. It is in vain to war with Fortune;

The glory hath departed from our house.
Ber. F. Who would have deem'd it?—
Ah! one moment sooner!

Doge. That moment would have
changed the face of ages; 275

This gives us to eternity—We'll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in
all, 278

Equal to every fortune. Droop not, 'tis
But a brief passage—I would go alone,
Yet if they send us, as 'tis like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.

Ber. F. I shall not shame you, uncle.

1st Sig. Lords, our orders
Are to keep guard on both in separate
chambers, 284

Until the council call ye to your trial.

Doge. Our trial! will they keep their
mockery up

Even to the last? but let them deal upon us,
As we had dealt on them, but with less
pomp.

'Tis but a game of mutual homicides,
Who have cast lots for the first death, and
they 290

Have won with false dice.—Who hath
been our Judas?

1st Sig. I am not warranted to answer
that.

Ber. F. I'll answer for thee—'tis a cer-
tain Bertram,
Even now deposing to the secret Giunta.

Doge. Bertram, the Bergamask! With
what vile tools 295

We operate to slay or save! This creature,
Black with a double treason, now will earn
Rewards and honours, and be stamp'd in
story

With the geese in the Capitol, which
gabbled

Till Rome awoke, and had an annual
triumph, 300

While Manlius, who hurl'd down the
Gauls, was cast

From the Tarpeian.

1st Sig. He aspired to treason,
And sought to rule the state.

Doge. He saved the state,
And sought but to reform what he re-
ceived—

But this is idle—Come, sirs, do your work.

1st Sig. Noble Bertuccio, we must now
remove you 306

Into an inner chamber.

Ber. F. Farewell, uncle!
If we shall meet again in life I know not,

But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.

Doge. Yes, and our spirits, which shall
yet go forth, 310

And do what our frail clay, thus clogg'd,
hath fail'd in!

They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurl'd them from their
guilty thrones,

And such examples will find heirs, though
distant.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*The Hall of the Council of Ten,*
assembled with the additional Sena-
tors, who, on the Trials of the Con-
spirators for the Treason of MARINO
FALIERO, composed what was called
the Giunta.—Guards, Officers, &c. &c.
—ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CAL-
ENDARO as Prisoners.—BERTRAM,
LIONI, and Witnesses, &c.

The Chief of the Ten, BENINTENDE.

Ben. There now rests, after such con-
viction of

Their manifold and manifest offences,
But to pronounce on these obdurate men
The sentence of the law:—a grievous task
To those who hear, and those who speak.

Alas! 5

That it should fall to me! and that my days
Should be stigmatised through all
The years of coming time, as bearing
record

To this most foul and complicated treason
Against a just and free state, known to all
The earth as being the Christian bulwark
'gainst 11

The Saracen and the schismatic Greek,
The savage Hun, and not less barbarous
Frank;

A city which has open'd India's wealth
To Europe; the last Roman refuge from
O'erwhelming Attila; the ocean's queen;
Proud Genoa's prouder rival! 'Tis to sap
The throne of such a city, these lost men
Have risk'd and forfeited their worthless
lives— 19

So let them die the death.

I. Ber. We are prepared;
Your racks have done that for us. Let us
die.

Ben. If ye have that to say which would
obtain

Abatement of your punishment, the Giunta
Will hear you; if you have aught to con-
fess, 24

Now is your time, perhaps it may avail ye.

I. Ber. We stand to hear, and not to
speak.

Ben. Your crimes
Are fully proved by your accomplices,
And all which circumstance can add to aid
them;

Yet we would hear from your own lips
complete 29

Avowal of your treason: on the verge
Of that dread gulf which none repass, the
truth

Alone can profit you on earth or heaven—
Say, then, what was your motive?

I. Ber. Justice!

Ben. What
Your object?

I. Ber. Freedom!
Ben. You are brief, sir.
I. Ber. So my life grows: I 35
 Was bred a soldier, not a senator.
Ben. Perhaps you think by this blunt
 brevity
 To brave your judges to postpone the sen-
 tence?
I. Ber. Do you be brief as I am, and
 believe me, 39
 I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.
Ben. Is this your sole reply to the tribunal?
I. Ber. Go, ask your racks what they
 have wrung from us,
 Or place us there again; we have still some
 blood left,
 And some slight sense of pain in these
 wretch'd limbs:
 But this ye dare not do; for if we die
 there— 45
 And you have left us little life to spend
 Upon your engines, gorged with pangs
 already—
 Ye lose the public spectacle, with which
 You would appal your slaves to further
 slavery!
 Groans are not words, nor agony assent,
 Nor affirmation truth, if nature's sense
 Should overcome the soul into a lie, 52
 For a short respite—must we bear or die?
Ben. Say, who were your accomplices?
I. Ber. The Senate.
Ben. What do you mean?
I. Ber. Ask of the suffering people,
 Whom your patrician crimes have driven
 to crime. 56
Ben. You know the Doge?
I. Ber. I served with him at Zara
 In the field, when *you* were pleading here
 your way
 To present office; we exposed our lives,
 While you but hazarded the lives of others,
 Alike by accusation or defence; 61
 And for the rest, all Venice knows her Doge,
 Through his great actions, and the Senate's
 insults.
Ben. You have held conference with
 him?
I. Ber. I am weary—
 Even wearier of your questions than your
 tortures: 65
 I pray you pass to judgment.
Ben. It is coming.
 And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what
 Have you to say why you should not be
 doomed?
Cal. I never was a man of many words,
 And now have few left worth the utterance.
Ben. A further application of yon en-
 gine 71
 May change your tone.
Cal. Most true, it *will* do so;
 A former application did so; but
 It will not change my words, or, if it did—

Ben. What then?
Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack
 Stand good in law?
Ben. Assuredly.
Cal. Whoe'er
 The culprit be whom I accuse of treason?
Ben. Without doubt, he will be brought
 up to trial. 78
Cal. And on this testimony would he
 perish?
Ben. So your confession be detail'd and
 full,
 He will stand here in peril of his life.
Cal. Then look well to thy proud self,
 President! 82
 For by the eternity which yawns before me,
 I swear that *thou*, and only thou, shalt be
 The traitor I denounce upon that rack,
 If I be stretch'd there for the second time.
One of the Giunta. Lord President,
 'twere best proceed to judgment;
 There is no more to be drawn from these
 men.
Ben. Unhappy men! prepare for instant
 death.
 The nature of your crime, our law, and
 peril 90
 The state now stands in, leave not an hour's
 respite.
 Guards! lead them forth, and upon the
 balcony
 Of the red columns, where, on festal Thurs-
 day,
 The Doge stands to behold the chase of
 bulls, 94
 Let them be justified: and leave exposed
 Their wavering relics, in the place of judg-
 ment,
 To the full view of the assembled people!
 And Heaven have mercy on their souls!
The Giunta. Amen!
I. Ber. Signors, farewell! we shall not
 all again 99
 Meet in one place.
Ben. And lest they should essay
 To stir up the distracted multitude—
 Guards! let their mouths be gagg'd even
 in the act
 Of execution. Lead them hence!
Cal. What! must we
 Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
 Nor leave a last word with our confessor?
Ben. A priest is waiting in the ante-
 chamber; 106
 But, for your friends, such interviews
 would be
 Painful to them, and useless all to you.
Cal. I knew that we were gagg'd in life;
 at least
 All those who had not heart to risk their
 lives 110
 Upon their open thoughts; but still I
 deem'd
 That in the last few moments, the same idle

Freedom of speech accorded to the dying,
Would not now be denied to us; but
since—

I. Ber. Even let them have their way,
brave Calendaro! 115

What matter a few syllables? let's die
Without the slightest show of favour from
them;

So shall our blood more readily arise
To Heaven against them, and more testify
To their atrocities, than could a volume
Spoken or written of our dying words!
They tremble at our voices—nay, they
dread 122

Our very silence—let them live in fear!
Leave them unto their thoughts, and let us
now

Address our own above!—Lead on; we
are ready. 125

Cal. Israel, hadst thou but hearken'd
unto me

It had not now been thus; and yon pale
villain,

The coward Bertram, would—

I. Ber. Peace, Calendaro!

What brooks it now to ponder upon this?

Bert. Alas! I fain you died in peace with
me: 130

I did not seek this task; 'twas forced upon
me:

Say, you forgive me, though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness—frown not
thus!

I. Ber. I die and pardon thee!

Cal. [spitting at him]. I die and
scorn thee!

[*Exeunt ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP
CALENDARO, Guards, &c.*]

Ben. Now that these criminals have
been disposed of, 135

'Tis time that we proceed to pass our
sentence

Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero!

The proofs and process are complete; the
time

And crime require a quick procedure:
shall 140

He now be call'd in to receive the award?
The Giunta. Ay, ay.

Ben. Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the council.

One of the Giunta. And the rest,

When shall they be brought up?
Ben. When all the chiefs

Have been disposed of. Some have fled to
Chiozza; 145

But there are thousands in pursuit of
them,

And such precaution ta'en on terra firma,
As well as in the islands, that we hope

None will escape to utter in strange lands
His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the
senate. 150

*Enter the DOGE as Prisoner, with
Guards, &c. &c.*

Ben. Doge—for such still you are, and
by the law

Must be consider'd, till the hour shall come
When you must doff the ducal bonnet from
That head, which could not wear a crown
more noble 154

Than empires can confer, in quiet honour,
But it must plot to overthrow your peers,
Who made you what you are, and quench
in blood

A city's glory—we have laid already
Before you in your chamber at full length,

By the Avogadori, all the proofs 160
Which have appear'd against you; and

more ample
Ne'er rear'd their sanguinary shadows to
Confront a traitor. What have you to say

In your defence?

Doge. What shall I say to ye,
Since my defence must be your condemna-
tion? 165

You are at once offenders and accusers,
Judges and executioners!—Proceed

Upon your power.
Ben. Your chief accomplices

Having confess'd, there is no hope for you.
Doge. And who be they?

Ben. In number many; but
The first now stands before you and the
court, 171

Bertram, of Bergamo,—would you ques-
tion him?

Doge. [looking at him contemptuously].
No.

Ben. And two others, Israel Bertuccio
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted

Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!
Doge. And where are they?

Ben. Gone to their place, and now
Answering to Heaven for what they did on
earth. 177

Doge. Ah! the plebeian Brutus, is he
gone?

And the quick Cassius of the arsenal?—
How did they meet their doom?

Ben. Think of your own:
It is approaching. You decline to plead,
then? 181

Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors,
nor

Can recognise your legal power to try me.
Show me the law!

Ben. On great emergencies
The law must be remodel'd or amended:

Our fathers had not fix'd the punishment
Of such a crime, as on the old Roman
tables 187

The sentence against parricide was left
In pure forgetfulness; they could not render

That penal, which had neither name nor
thought 190

In their great bosoms; who would have foreseen

That nature could be filed to such a crime
As sons 'gainst sires, and princes 'gainst their realms?

Your sin hath made us make a law which will

Become a precedent 'gainst such haught traitors, 195

As would with treason mount to tyranny;
Not even contented with a sceptre, till
They can convert it to a two-edged sword!
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?
What's nobler than the signory of Venice?

Doge. The signory of Venice! You betray'd me— 201

*You—*you, who sit there, traitors as ye are!
From my equality with you in birth,

And my superiority in action,
You drew me from my honourable toils

In distant lands—on flood, in field, in cities— 206

You singled me out like a victim to
Stand crown'd, but bound and helpless, at the altar

Where you alone could minister. I knew not,

I sought not, wish'd not, dream'd not the election, 210

Which reach'd me first at Rome, and I obey'd;

But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you

To mock and mar your sovereign's best intents, 214

You had, even in the interregnum of
My journey to the capital, curtail'd

And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the duke: all this I bore, and would

Have borne, until my very hearth was stain'd

By the pollution of your ribaldry, 220
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you—

Fit judge in such a tribunal!—

Ben. [interrupting him]. Michel Steno
Is here in virtue of his office, as

One of the Forty; 'the Ten' having craved
A Giunta of patricians from the senate

To aid our judgment in a trial arduous
And novel as the present: he was set

Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the

law, 229
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim

No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates!

Doge. His PUNISHMENT! I rather see him there,

Where he now sits, to glut him with my death, 234

Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show

of justice

Decreed as sentence! Base as was his crime,
'Twas purity compared with your protection.

Ben. And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice, 239

With three parts of a century of years
And honours on his head, could thus allow

His fury, like an angry boy's, to master
All feeling, wisdom, faith, and fear, on such

A provocation as a young man's petulance?

Doge. A spark creates the flame—'tis the last drop 245

Which makes the cup run o'er, and mine was full

Already: you oppress'd the prince and people;

I would have freed both, and have fail'd in both:

The price of such success would have been glory, 249

Vengeance, and victory, and such a name
As would have made Venetian history

Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourish'd ages

after, 253
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus:—

Failing, I know the penalty of failure
Is present infamy and death—the future

Will judge, when Venice is no more, or free;

Till then, the truth is in abeyance. Pause not;

I would have shown no mercy, and I seek none; 259

My life was staked upon a mighty hazard,
And being lost, take what I would have

taken!

I would have stood alone amidst your tombs:

Now you may flock round mine, and trample on it,

As you have done upon my heart while living.

Ben. You do confess then, and admit the justice 265

Of our tribunal?

Doge. I confess to have fail'd;
Fortune is female: from my youth her

favours
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope

Her former smiles again at this late hour.

Ben. You do not then in aught arraign our equity? 270

Doge. Noble Venetians! stir me not with questions.

I am resign'd to the worst; but in me still
Have something of the blood of brighter

days,
And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me

Further interrogation, which boots nothing, 275

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT V

Except to turn a trial to debate.

I shall but answer that which will offend you,
And please your enemies—a host already;
'Tis true, these sullen walls should yield no
echo:

But walls have ears—nay, more, they have
tongues; and if

There were no other way for truth to o'er-
leap them,

You who condemn me, you who fear and
slay me,

Yet could not bear in silence to your graves
What you would hear from me of good or
evil;

The secret were too mighty for your souls:
Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court
A danger which would double that you
escape.

Such my defence would be, had I full scope
To make it famous; for true words are
things,

And dying men's are things which long
outlive,

And oftentimes avenge them; bury mine,
If ye would fain survive me: take this
counsel,

And though too oft ye made me live in
wrath,

Let me die calmly; you may grant me this;
I deny nothing, defend nothing, nothing
I ask of you, but silence for myself,

And sentence from the court!
Ben. This full admission
Spares us the harsh necessity of ordering
The torture to elicit the whole truth.

Doge. The torture! you have put me
there already,

Daily since I was Doge; but if you will
Add the corporeal rack, you may: these
limbs

Will yield with age to crushing iron; but
There's that within my heart shall strain
your engines.

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer. Noble Venetians! Duchess Fal-
iero

Requests admission to the Giunta's
presence.

Ben. Say, conscript fathers, shall she be
admitted?

One of the Giunta. She may have revela-
tions of importance

Unto the state, to justify compliance

With her request.
Ben. Is this the general will?

All. It is.
Doge. Oh! admirable laws of Venice!

Which would admit the wife, in the full
hope

That she might testify against the husband.
What glory to the chaste Venetian dames!

But such blasphemers 'gainst all honour,
as

Sit here, do well to act in their vocation.
Now, villain Steno! if this woman fail,
I'll pardon thee thy lie, and thy escape,
And my own violent death, and thy vile life.

The DUCHESS enters.

Ben. Lady! this just tribunal has re-
solved,

Though the request be strange, to grant it,
and

Whatever be its purport, to accord
A patient hearing with the due respect

Which fits your ancestry, your rank, and
virtues;

But you turn pale—ho! there, look to the
lady!

Place a chair instantly.

Ang. A moment's faintness—
'Tis past; I pray you pardon me,—I sit not
in presence of my prince and of my hus-
band,

While he is on his feet.

Ben. Your pleasure, lady?

Ang. Strange rumours, but most true,
if all I hear

And see be sooth, have reach'd me, and I
come

To know the worst, even at the worst; for-
give

The abruptness of my entrance and my
bearing.

Is it—I cannot speak—I cannot shape
The question—but you answer it ere
spoken,

With eyes averted, and with gloomy
brows—

Oh God! this is the silence of the grave!

Ben. [after a pause]. Spare us, and spare
thyself the repetition

Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to Heaven and man!

Ang. Yet speak; I cannot—
I cannot—no—even now believe these
things.

Is he condemned?

Ben. Alas!

Ang. And was he guilty?

Ben. Lady! the natural distraction of
Thy thoughts at such a moment makes the
question

Merit forgiveness; else a doubt like this
Against a just and paramount tribunal

Were deep offence. But question even the
Doge,

And if he can deny the proofs, believe him
Guiltless as thy own bosom.

Ang. Is it so?

My lord, my sovereign, my poor father's
friend,

The mighty in the field, the sage in council,
Unsay the words of this man!—Thou art
silent!

Ben. He hath already own'd to his own
guilt,

Nor, as thou see'st, doth he deny it now.

Ang. Ay, but he must not die! Spare his
few years, 355

Which grief and shame will soon cut down
to days!

One day of baffled crime must not efface
Near sixteen lustres crowded with brave
acts.

Ben. His doom must be fulfill'd without
remission

Of time or penalty—'tis a decree. 360

Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may
be mercy.

Ben. Not in this case with justice.

Ang. Alas! signor,
He who is only just is cruel; who

Upon the earth would live were all judged
justly?

Ben. His punishment is safety to the
state. 365

Ang. He was a subject, and hath served
the state;

He was your general, and hath saved the
state;

He is your sovereign, and hath ruled the
state.

One of the Council. He is a traitor, and
betray'd the state.

Ang. And, but for him, there now had
been no state 370

To save or to destroy; and you, who sit
There to pronounce the death of your de-
liverer,

Had now been groaning at a Moslem oar,
Or digging in the Hunnish mines in fetters!

One of the Council. No, lady, there are
others who would die 375

Rather than breathe in slavery!

Ang. If there are so
Within these walls, thou art not of the
number:

The truly brave are generous to the
fallen!—

Is there no hope?

Ben. Lady, it cannot be.

Ang. [turning to the Doge]. Then die,
Faliero! since it must be so; 380

But with the spirit of my father's friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half cancell'd by the harshness of these
men.

I would have sued to them, have pray'd
to them,

Have begg'd as famish'd mendicants for
bread, 385

Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answer'd as they an-
swer,—

Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes

Had not announced the heartless wrath
within. 390

Then, as a prince, address thee to thy
doom!

Doge. I have lived too long not to know
how to die!

Thy suing to these men were but the bleat-
ing

Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge: I would not take

A life eternal, granted at the hands 396

Of wretches, from whose monstrous vil-
lainies

I sought to free the groaning nations!

Michel Steno. Doge,
A word with thee, and with this noble
lady,

Whom I have grievously offended. Would

Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part,
Could cancel the inexorable past! 402

But since that cannot be, as Christians let
us

Say farewell, and in peace: with full con-
trition

I crave, not pardon, but compassion from
you, 405

And give, however weak, my prayers for
both.

Ang. Sage Benintende, now chief judge
of Venice,

I speak to thee in answer to yon signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words

Ne'er weigh'd in mind with Loredano's
daughter, 410

Further than to create a moment's pity
For such as he is: would that others had
Despis'd him as I pity! I prefer

My honour to a thousand lives, could such
Be multiplied in mine, but would not have

A single life of others lost for that 416

Which nothing human can impugn—the
sense

Of virtue, looking not to what is call'd
A good name for reward, but to itself.

To me the scorner's words were as the
wind 420

Unto the rock: but as there are—alas!
Spirits more sensitive, on which such
things

Light as the whirlwind on the waters; souls
To whom dishonour's shadow is a sub-
stance

More terrible than death, here and here-
after; 425

Men whose vice is to start at vice's scoffing,
And who, though proof against all blan-
dishments

Of pleasure, and all pangs of pain, are
feeble

When the proud name on which they pin-
naced

Their hopes is breathed on, jealous as the
eagle 430

Of her high airy; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson

To wretches how they tamper in their
spleen

With beings of a higher order. Insects

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

[ACT V

Have made the lion mad ere now; a shaft
I' the heel o'erthrew the bravest of the
brave; 436

A wife's dishonour was the bane of Troy;
A wife's dishonour unking'd Rome for
ever;

An injured husband brought the Gauls to
Clusium,

And thence to Rome, which perish'd for a
time; 440

An obscene gesture cost Caligula
His life, while Earth yet bore his cruelties;
A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish
province;

And Steno's lie, couch'd in two worthless
lines, 444

Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
A senate which hath stood eight hundred
years,

Discrown'd a prince, cut off his crownless
head,

And forged new fetters for a groaning
people!

Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this,

If it so please him—'twere a pride fit for
him! 451

But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate'er he now is, was a hero,

By the intrusion of his very prayers;
Nothing of good can come from such a
source, 455

Nor would we aught with him, nor now,
nor ever:

We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,

And not for reptiles—we have none for
Steno,

And no resentment: things like him must
sting, 460

And higher beings suffer; 'tis the charter
Of life. The man who dies by the adder's
fang

May have the crawler crush'd, but feels no
anger:

'Twas the worm's nature; and some men
are worms

In soul more than the living things of
tombs. 465

Doge [to Ben.]. Signor! complete that
which you deem your duty.

Ben. Before we can proceed upon that
duty,

We would request the princess to with-
draw;

'Twill move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must en-
dure it, 470

For 'tis a part of mine—I will not quit,
Except by force, my husband's side.—
Proceed!

Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear;
Though my heart burst it shall be silent.—
Speak!

I have that within which shall o'ermaster
all. 475

Ben. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
Count of Val di Marino, Senator,

And some time General of the Fleet and
Army,

Noble Venetian, many times and oft
Intrusted by the state with high employ-
ments, 480

Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.
Convict by many witnesses and proofs,

And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of treachery and treason, yet unheard of
Until this trial—the decree is death.

Thy goods are confiscate unto the state,
Thy name is razed from out her records,
save 487

Upon a public day of thanksgiving
For this our most miraculous deliverance,

When thou art noted in our calendars
With earthquakes, pestilence, and foreign
foes, 491

And the great enemy of man, as subject
Of grateful masses for Heaven's grace in
snatching

Our lives and country from thy wickedness.
The place wherein as Doge thou shouldst
be painted, 495

With thine illustrious predecessors, is
To be left vacant, with a death-black veil
Flung over these dim words engraved be-
neath,—

'This place is of Marino Faliero, 499
Decapitated for his crimes.'

Doge. 'His crimes!'
But let it be so;—it will be in vain.

The veil which blackens o'er this blighted
name,

And hides, or seems to hide, these line-
aments,

Shall draw more gazers than the thousand
portraits

Which glitter round it in their pictured
trappings— 505

Your delegated slaves—the people's ty-
rants!

'Decapitated for his crimes!'—*What*
crimes?

Were it not better to record the facts,
So that the contemplator might approve,

Or at the least learn whence the crimes
arose? 510

When the beholder knows a Doge con-
spired,

Lethim be told the cause—it is your history.

Ben. Time must reply to that; our sons
will judge

Their fathers' judgment, which I now pro-
nounce.

As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and cap,
Thou shalt be led hence to the Giant's
Staircase, 516

Where thou and all our princes are in-
vested;

And there, the ducal crown being first resumed

Upon the spot where it was first assumed,
Thy head shall be struck off; and Heaven
have mercy 520

Upon thy soul!

Doge. Is this the Giunta's sentence?

Ben. It is.

Doge. I can endure it.—And the time?

Ben. Must be immediate.—Make thy
peace with God:

Within an hour thou must be in His presence.

Doge. I am *already*; and my blood will
rise 525

To Heaven before the souls of those who
shed it.

Are all my lands confiscated?

Ben. They are;

And goods, and jewels, and all kind of
treasure,

Except two thousand ducats—these dis-
pose of.

Doge. That's harsh.—I would have
fain reserved the lands 530

Near to Treviso, which I hold by investment
From Laurence the Count-bishop of
Ceneda,

In fief perpetual to myself and heirs,
To portion them (leaving my city spoil,
My palace and my treasures, to your por-
feit) 535

Between my consort and my kinsmen.

Ben. These

Lie under the state's ban; their chief, thy
nephew,

In peril of his own life; but the council
Postpones his trial for the present. If

Thou wilt'st a state unto thy widow'd prin-
cess, 540

Fear not, for we will do her justice.

Ang. Signors,

I share not in your spoil! From hence-
forth, know

I am devoted unto God alone,

And take my refuge in the cloister.

Doge. Come!

The hour may be a hard one, but 'twill end.
Have I aught else to undergo save death?

Ben. You have nought to do, except
confess and die. 547

The priest is robbed, the scimitar is bare,
And both await without. But, above all,

Think not to speak unto the people; they
Are now by thousands swarming at the
gates, 551

But these are closed: the Ten, the Avoga-
dori,

The Giunta, and the chief men of the Forty,
Alone will be beholders of thy doom,

And they are ready to attend the Doge.

Doge. The Doge!

Ben. Yes, Doge, thou hast lived
and thou shalt die 556

And till the moment which pre-
cedes

The separation of that head and trunk,
That ducal crown and head shall be united.

Thou hast forgot thy dignity in deigning
To plot with petty traitors; not so we,

Who in the very punishment acknowledge
The prince. Thy vile accomplices have
died

The dog's death, and the wolf's: but thou
shalt fall

As falls the lion by the hunters, girt 565
By those who feel a proud compassion for
thee,

And mourn even the inevitable death
Provoked by thy wild wrath and regal
fierceness.

Now we remit thee to thy preparation:
Let it be brief, and we ourselves will be

Thy guides unto the place where first we
were 571

United to thee as thy subjects, and
Thy senate; and must now be parted from
thee

As such for ever, on the self-same spot.
Guards! form the Doge's escort to his
chamber. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The Doge's Apartment.*

*The DOGE as Prisoner, and the DUCHESS
attending him.*

Doge. Now, that the priest is gone,
'twere useless all

To linger out the miserable minutes;
But one pang more, the pang of parting
from thee,

And I will leave the few last grains of sand
Which yet remain of the accorded hour,
Still falling—I have done with Time.

Ang. Alas!

And I have been the cause, the unconscious
cause;

And for this funeral marriage, this black
union,

Which thou, compliant with my father's
wish,

Didst promise at his death, thou hast
seal'd thine own. 10

Doge. Not so; there was that in my
spirit ever

Which shaped out for itself some great
reverse;

The marvel is, it came not until now—
And yet it was foretold me.

Ang. How foretold you?

Doge. Long years ago—so long, they
are a doubt 15

In memory, and yet they live in annals:
When I was in my youth, and served the
senate

And signory as podesta and captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day

Of festival, the sluggish bishop who 20

Convey'd the Host aroused my ^{young} rash The thought, that these things are the
 By strange , and arrogant reply work of Fate;
 To my rep^l I raised my hand and For I would rather yield to gods than men,
 smote him, Rather than deem these mortals, most of
 Until he reel'd beneath his holy burthen; whom 69
 And as he rose from earth again, he raised I know to be as worthless as the dust,
 His tremulous hands in pious wrath to- And weak as worthless, more than instru-
 wards Heaven. 26 ments
 Thence pointing to the Host, which had Of an o'erwhelming power; they in themselves
 fallen from him, Were all incapable—they could not be
 He turn'd to me, and said, 'The hour will Victors of him who oft had conquer'd for
 come them.
 When he thou hast o'erthrown shall over- Ang. Employ the minutes left in aspira-
 throw thee: tions 75
 The glory shall depart from out thy house, Of a more healing nature, and in peace
 The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul, Even with these wretches take thy flight to
 And in thy best maturity of mind 32 heaven.
 A madness of the heart shall seize upon Doge. I am at peace: the peace of cer-
 thee; tainty
 Passion shall tear thee when all passions That a sure hour will come, when their
 sons' sons,
 In other men, or mellow into virtues; And this proud city, and these azure
 And majesty, which decks all other heads, waters, 80
 Shall crown to leave thee headless; honours And all which makes them eminent and
 shall bright,
 But prove to thee the heralds of destruc- Shall be a desolation and a curse,
 tion, A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
 And hoary hairs of shame, and both of A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel.
 death, 39 Ang. Speak not thus now: the surge of
 But not such death as fits an aged man.' passion still 85
 Thus saying, he pass'd on.—That hour is Sweeps o'er thee to the last; thou dost
 come. deceive
 Ang. And with this warning couldst Thyself, and canst not injure them—be
 thou not have striven calmer.
 To avert the fatal moment, and atone, Doge. I stand within eternity, and see
 By penitence, for that which thou hadst Into eternity, and I behold—
 done? Ay, palpable as I see thy sweet face 90
 Doge. I own the words went to my For the last time—the days which I de-
 heart, so much nounce 45
 That I remember'd them amid the maze Unto all time against these wave-girt walls,
 Of life, as if they form'd a spectral voice, And they who are indwellers.
 Which shook me in a supernatural dream; Guard [coming forward]. Doge of Venice,
 And I repented; but 'twas not for me The Ten are in attendance on your high-
 To pull in resolution: what must be 50 ness.
 I could not change, and would not fear.— Doge. Then farewell, Angiolina!—one
 Nay more, embrace— 95
 Thou canst not have forgot, what all re- Forgive the old man who hath been to
 member, thee
 That on my day of landing here as Doge, A fond but fatal husband—love my
 On my return from Rome, a mist of such memory—
 Unwonted density went on before 55 I would not ask so much for me still living,
 The Bucentaur, like the columnar cloud But thou canst judge of me more kindly
 Which usher'd Israel out of Egypt, till now,
 The pilot was misled, and disembark'd us Seeing my evil feelings are at rest. 100
 Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where Besides, of all the fruit of these long years,
 'tis 59 Glory, and wealth, and power, and fame,
 The custom of the state to put to death and name,
 Its criminals, instead of touching at Which generally leave some flowers to
 The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is,—bloom
 So that all Venice shudder'd at the omen. Even o'er the grave, I have nothing left,
 Ang. Ah! little boots it now to recollect not even 104
 Such things. A little love, or friendship, or esteem,
 Doge. And yet I find a comfort in 65 No, not enough to extract an epitaph

From ostentatious kinsmen; in one hour
I have uprooted all my former life,
And outlived everything, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will
 off 110

With unimpair'd but not a clamorous
grief

Still keep—Thou turn'st so pale!—Alas!
she faints,

She has no breath, no pulse!—Guards!
lend your aid—

I cannot leave her thus, and yet 'tis better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal.—Call her
women— 117

One look!—how cold her hand!—as cold
as mine

Shall be ere she recovers.—Gently tend
her,

And take my last thanks—I am ready
now. 120

[*The Attendants of ANGIOLINA enter,
and surround their Mistress, who has
fainted.—Exeunt the DOGE, Guards,
&c. &c.*

SCENE III.—*The Court of the Ducal Palace;
the outer gates are shut against
the people.—The DOGE enters in his
ducal robes, in procession with the
Council of Ten and other Patricians,
attended by the Guards, till they arrive
at the top of the 'Giants' Staircase'
(where the Doges took the oaths); the
Executioner is stationed there with his
sword.—On arriving, a Chief of the
Ten takes off the ducal cap from the
Doge's head.*

Doge. So now the Doge is nothing, and
at last

I am again Marino Faliero:

'Tis well to be so, though but for a
moment.

Here was I crown'd, and here, bear witness,
Heaven!

With how much more contentment I

That shining mockery, the ducal bauble,
Than I received the fatal ornament.

One of the Ten. Thou tremblest, Faliero!
Doge. 'Tis with age, then.

Ben. Faliero! hast thou aught further
to commend,

Compatible with justice, to the senate?

Doge. I would commend my nephew to
their mercy, 11

My consort to their justice; for methinks
My death, and such a death, might settle
all

Between the state and me.

Ben. They shall be cared for;

Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of
crime. 15

Doge. Unheard of! ay, there's not a
history

But shows a thousand crown'd conspirators

Against the people; but to set them free,
One sovereign only died, and one is dying.

Ben. And who were they who fell in
such a cause? 20

Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge
of Venice—

Agis and Faliero!

Ben. Hast thou more

To utter or to do?

Doge. May I speak?

Ben. Thou may'st;

But recollect the people are without, 24
Beyond the compass of the human voice.

Doge. I speak to Time and to Eternity,
Of which I grow a portion, not to man.

Ye elements! in which to be resolved
I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit

Upon you! Ye blue waves! which bore
my banner, 30

Ye winds! which flutter'd o'er as if you
loved it,

And fill'd my swelling sails as they were
wafted

To many a triumph! Thou, my native
earth,

Which I have bled for! and thou, foreign
earth,

Which drank this willing blood from many
a wound! 35

Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink,
but

Reek up to heaven! Ye skies, which will
receive it!

Thou sun! which shinest on these things,
and Thou!

Who kindest and who quenchest suns!—
Attest!

I am not innocent—but are these guiltless?
I perish, but not unavenged: far ages 41

Float up from the abyss of time to be,
And show these eyes, before they close,
the doom

Of this proud city, and I leave my curse
On her and hers for ever!—Yes, the
hours 45

Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bul-
wark,

Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely
yield,

Unto a bastard Attila, without
Shedding so much blood in her last de-
fence, 50

As these old veins, oft drain'd in shielding
her,

Shall pour in sacrifice.—She shall be
bought

And sold, and be an appanage to those
Who shall despise her!—She shall stoop
to be 54

A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, panders for a people!
Then when the Hebrew's in thy palaces,
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for
his;

When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful
need

Make their nobility a plea for pity;
Then, when the few who still retain a
wreck

Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-
gerent,

Even in the palace where they sway'd as
sovereigns,

Even in the palace where they slew their
sovereign,

Proud of some name they have disgraced,
or sprung

From an adulteress boastful of her guilt
With some large gondolier or foreign
soldier,

Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation;—when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the
victors,

Despised by cowards for greater cowar-
dice,

And scorn'd even by the vicious for such
vices

As in the monstrous grasp of their con-
ception

Defy all codes to image or to name them;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject
kingdom,

All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entail'd on thy less virtuous daughters,
grown

A wider proverb for worse prostitution;—
When all the ills of conquer'd states shall
cling thee,

Vice without splendour, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smooth it
o'er,

But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,
Prurient yet passionless, cold studied
lewdness,

Depraving nature's frailty to an art;—
When these and more are heavy on thee,
when

Smiles without mirth, and pastimes with-
out pleasure,

Youth without honour, age without res-
pect,

Meanness and weakness, and a sense of
woe

'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and
dar'st not murmur,

Have made thee last and worst of peopled

Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
Amidst thy many murders, think of mine!
Thou den of drunkards with the blood of
princes!

Gehenna of the waters! thou sea-Sodom!
Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods!
Thee and thy serpent seed!

[Here the DOGE turns and addresses the
Executioner.

Slave, do thine office!
Strike as I struck the foe! Strike as I would
Have struck those tyrants! Strike deep as
my curse!

Strike—and but once!

[The DOGE throws himself upon his
knees, and as the Executioner raises
his sword the scene closes.

SCENE IV.—*The Piazza and Piazzetta of
St. Mark's.—The people in crowds
gathered round the grated gates of the
Ducal Palace, which are shut.*

First Citizen. I have gain'd the gate,
and can discern the Ten,

Robed in their gowns of state, ranged
round the Doge.

Second. Cit. I cannot reach thee with
mine utmost effort.

How is it? let us hear at least, since sight
Is thus prohibited unto the people,

Except the occupiers of those bars.

First Cit. One has approach'd the
Doge, and now they strip

The ducal bonnet from his head—and now
He raises his keen eyes to heaven; I see
Them glitter, and his lips move—Hush!

hush!—no,

'Twas but a murmur—Curse upon the dis-
tance!

His words are inarticulate, but the voice
Swells up like mutter'd thunder; would we
could

But gather a sole sentence!

Second Cit. Hush! we perhaps may
catch the sound.

First Cit. 'Tis vain,

I cannot hear him.—How his hoary hair
Streams on the wind like foam upon the
wave!

Now—now—he kneels—and now they
form a circle

Round him, and all is hidden—but I see
The lifted sword in air—Ah! hark! it
falls!

[The people murmur.

Third Cit. Then they have murder'd
him who would have freed us.

Fourth Cit. He was a kind man to the
commons ever.

Fifth Cit. Wisely they did to keep their
portals barr'd.

Would we had known the work they were
preparing

SCENE IV]

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

Ere we were summon'd here—we would 'Justice hath dealt upon the mighty
have brought 25 Traitor!'

Weapons, and forced them!

Sixth Cit. Are you sure he's dead?

First Cit. I saw the sword fall—Lo!
what have we here?

[*The gates are opened; the populace rush in towards the 'Giants' Staircase,' where the execution has taken place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,*

Enter on the Balcony of the Palace which fronts St. Mark's Place a CHIEF OF THE TEN, with a bloody sword. He waves it thrice before the People, and exclaims,

'The gory head rolls down the Giants' Steps!' [The curtain falls.

SARDANAPALUS

A TRAGEDY

TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE

A STRANGER PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE OF A
LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD, THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.

THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM IS ENTITLED,
SARDANAPALUS

PREFACE

In publishing the following Tragedies* I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the 'unities'; conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilized parts of it. But 'nous avons changé tout cela,' and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that anything he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular, predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect,—and not in the art.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

SARDANAPALUS, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, &c.*
ARBACES, *the Mede who aspired to the Throne.*
BELESSES, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*
SALEMENES, *the King's Brother-in-Law.*
ALTADA, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*
PANIA.
ZAMES.
SPERO.
BALEA.

WOMEN

ZARINA, *the Queen.*
MYRRHA, *an Ionian female Slave, and the Favourite of SARDANAPALUS.*

Women composing the Harem of SARDANAPALUS, Guards, Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, &c. &c.

SCENE.—A Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh

In this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history.

ACT I

SCENE I.—A Hall in the Palace.

Salmenes [solus]. He hath wrong'd his queen, but still he is her lord;

He hath wrong'd my sister, still he is my brother;

He hath wrong'd his people, still he is their sovereign,

And I must be his friend as well as subject:

* 'Sardanapalus' and 'The Two Foscari.'

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT I

He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis 6
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred
years

Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale;
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage which cor-
ruption 10

Has not all quench'd, and latent energies,
Repress'd by circumstance, but not de-
stroy'd—

Steep'd, but not drown'd, in deep volup-
tuousness.

If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reach'd an empire: to an empire
born, 15

He will bequeath none; nothing but a
name,

Which his sons will not prize in heritage:
Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem
His sloth and shame, by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing
He should not be and is. Were it less toil
To sway his nations than consume his life?
To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his
soul,

And saps his goodly strength, in toils
which yield not 25

Health like the chase, nor glory like the
war—

He must be roused. Alas! there is no
sound

[*Sound of soft music heard from within.*
To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the
lute,

The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tink-
lings

Of lulling instruments, the softening
voices 30

Of women, and of beings less than women,
Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great king of all we know of earth
Lolls crown'd with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up 35
By the first manly hand which dares to
snatch it.

Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
And see the bright gems of the glittering
girls, 39

At once his chorus and his council, flash
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garb'd, and scarce less fe-
male,

The grandson of Semiramis, the man-
queen.—

He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and
front him,

And tell him what all good men tell each
other, 45

Speaking of him and his. They come, the
slaves

Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.

SCENE II

*Enter SARDANAPALUS effeminately dressed,
his Head crowned with Flowers, and
his Robe negligently flowing, attended
by a Train of Women and young Slaves.*

Sar. [speaking to some of his attendants].
Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnish'd forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought
wanting, 4

And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad
clear river:

We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who
deign

To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above
us, 10

And you will form a heaven as bright as
theirs;

Till then, let each be mistress of her time,
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha, choose
Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr. My lord—

*Sar. My lord!—my life! why answerest
thou so coldly? 15*

It is the curse of kings to be so answer'd.
Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine—

say, wouldst thou
Accompany our guests, or charm away
The moments from me?

Myr. The king's choice is mine.

*Sar. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest
joy 20*

Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine; for thou
art still

Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for
others.

*Myr. I would remain: I have no happi-
ness 25*

Save in beholding thine; yet—

Sar. Yet! what yet?

Thy own sweet will shall be the only
barrier

Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.

*Myr. I think the present is the wonted
hour*

Of council; it were better I retire. 30

*Sal. [comes forward and says] The
Ionian slave says well: let her retire.*

Sar. Who answers? How now, brother?

*Sal. The queen's brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.*

*Sar. [addressing his train]. As I have
said, let all dispose their hours 34*

Till midnight, when again we pray your
presence. [*The court retiring.*
[*To MYRRHA, who is going.*] Myrrha! I
thought thou wouldst remain.

Myr. Great king, However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
 Thou didst not say so. The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Sar. But thou lookedst it: Corrupt no less than they oppress, and
 I know each glance of those Ionic eyes, sap 75
 Which said thou wouldst not leave me. In the same moment all thy pageant power
Myr. Sire! your brother- And those who should sustain it; so that
Sal. His consort's brother, minion of whether
 Ionia! 40 A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
 How darest thou name me and not blush? Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
Sar. Not blush! The first thy subjects have no heart to
 Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make conquer; 80
 her crimson The last they rather would assist than
 Like to the dying day on Caucasus, vanquish.
 Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows.
 And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness, 45
 Which will not see it. What! in tears, my Myrrha?
Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
 And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.
Sar. Cursed be he who caused those tears to flow!
Sal. Curse not thyself—millions do that already. 50
Sar. Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
 I am a monarch.
Sal. Would thou couldst!
Myr. My sovereign,
 I pray, and thou, too, prince, permit my absence.
Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has check'd
 Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect 55
 That we must forthwith meet: I had rather lose
 An empire than thy presence. [Exit MYRRHA.
Sal. It may be
 Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever!
Sar. Brother!
 I can at least command myself, who listen
 To language such as this: yet urge me not
 Beyond my easy nature. 'Tis beyond 61
 That easy, far too easy, idle nature,
 Which I would urge thee. O that I could
 rouse thee!
 Though 'twere against myself.
Sar. By the god Baal
 The man would make me tyrant.
Sal. So thou art.
 Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
 Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice, 67
 The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,
 The negligence, the apathy, the evils
 Of sensual sloth—produce ten thousand tyrants,
 Whose delegated cruelty surpasses 71
 The worst acts of one energetic master,

Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps', who provide no
better?

Sal. And somewhat in the monarch
who ne'er looks

Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 'tis but to some mountain
palace,

Till summer heats wear down. O glorious
Baal!

Who built up this vast empire, and wert
made

A god, or at the least shimest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er

beheld

As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as
hero,

Won with thy blood, and toil, and time,
and peril!

For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.

Sar. I understand thee—thou wouldst
have me go

Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read—the restless

slaves
Deserve that I should curse them with
their wishes,

And lead them forth to glory.

Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis—a woman only—led

These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.

Sar. 'Tis most true. And how re-
turn'd?

Sal. Why, like a man—a hero; baffled,
but

Not vanquish'd. With but twenty guards,
she made

Good her retreat to Bactria.

Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?

Sal. Our annals say not.

Sar. Then I will say for them—
That she had better woven within her

palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty
guards

Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men—the fiercer of the

three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this*
glory?

Then let me live in ignominy ever.

Sal. All warlike spirits have not the
same fate.

Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she fail'd in

India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the
realm

Which she once sway'd—and thou *might'st*
sway.

Sar. I sway them—
She but subdued them.

Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than
your sceptre.

Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was
there not?

I've heard my Greek girls speak of such—
they say

He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,

Who conquer'd this same golden realm
of Ind

Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was
vanquish'd.

Sal. I have heard of such a man; and
thou perceiv'st

That he is deem'd a god for what he did.

Sar. And in his godship I will honour
him—

Not much as man. What, ho! my cup-
bearer?

Sal. What means the king?

Sar. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sar. [addressing the Cupbearer]. Bring
me the golden goblet, thick with

gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's cha-
lice. Hence,

Fill full, and bear it quickly.

[Exit Cupbearer.]
Sal. Is this moment

A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sar. [taking the cup from him]. Noble
kinsman,

If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this

Bacchus

Conquer'd the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deem'd a
deity.

Sar. Not so!—of all his conquests a few
columns

Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and con-
veyance, are

The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he

broke.

But here, here in this goblet is his title
To immortality—the immortal grape

From which he first express'd the soul, and
gave

To gladden that of man, as some atone-
ment

For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have
been

A mortal still in name as in his grave;
 And, like my ancestor Semiramis, 180
 A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
 Here's that which deified him—let it now
 Humanise thee; my surly, chiding brother
 Pledge me to the Greek god!

Sal. For all thy realms
 I would not so blaspheme our country's
 creed. 185

Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him
 a hero,
 That he shed blood by oceans; and no god,
 Because he turn'd a fruit to an enchant-
 ment,

Which cheers the sad, revives the old,
 inspires

The young, makes weariness forget his
 toil, 190

And fear her danger; opens a new world
 When this, the present, palls. Well, then
 I pledge thee

And him as a true man, who did his utmost
 In good or evil to surprise mankind.

[*Drinks.*
Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this
 hour? 195

Sar. And if I did, 'twere better than a
 trophy,
 Being bought without a tear. But that is
 not

My present purpose: since thou wilt not
 pledge me,
 Continue what thou pleasest.

[*To the Cupbearer.*] Boy, retire.

[*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. I would but have recall'd thee from
 thy dream; 200

Better by me awaken'd than rebellion.

Sar. Who should rebel? or why? what
 cause? pretext?

I am the lawful king, descended from
 A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
 What have I done to thee, or to the people,
 That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up
 against me? 206

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I
 speak not.

Sar. But
 Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the
 queen; is't not so?

Sal. Think! Thou hast wrong'd her!

Sar. Patience, prince, and hear me.
 She has all power and splendour of her
 station, 210

Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
 The homage and the appanage of sove-
 reignty.

I married her as monarchs wed—for state,
 And loved her as most husbands love their
 wives.

If she or thou supposedst I could link me
 Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
 Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor man-
 kind. 217

Sal. I pray thee, change the theme: my
 blood disdains

Complaint, and Salmenes' sister seeks not
 Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord!
 Nor would she deign to accept divided
 passion 221

With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
 The queen is silent.

Sar. And why not her brother?
Sal. I only echo thee the voice of em-
 pires,

Which he who long neglects not long will
 govern. 225

Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious
 slaves! they murmur

Because I have not shed their blood, nor
 led them

To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
 Or whiten with their bones the banks of
 Ganges; 229

Nor decimated them with savage laws,
 Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
 Or Babylonian walls.

Sal. Yet these are trophies
 More worthy of a people and their prince
 Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and
 concubines,

And lavish'd treasures, and contemned
 virtues. 235

Sar. Or for my trophies I have founded
 cities:

There's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
 In one day—what could that blood-loving
 beldame, 238

My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
 Do more, except destroy them?

Sal. 'Tis most true;
 I own thy merit in those founded cities,
 Built for a whim, recorded with a verse,
 Which shames both them and thee to
 coming ages.

Sar. Shame me! By Baal, the cities,
 though well built,

Are not more goodly than the verse! Say
 what 245

Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or
 rule,

But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief
 record.

Why, those few lines contain the history
 Of all things human: hear—'Sardanapalus,

The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
 In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.

Eat, drink, and love; the rest's not worth
 a filipp.

Sal. A worthy moral, and a wise in-
 scription,

For a king to put up before his subjects!
Sar. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubt-
 less set up edicts— 255

'Obey the king—contribute to his trea-
 sure—

Recruit his phalanx—spill your blood at
 bidding—

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT I

Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.
Or thus—Sardanapalus on this spot
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies. 260
These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.

I leave such things to conquerors; enough
For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Unroaring to the tomb: I take no licence
Which I deny to them. We all are men.

Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods—

Sar. In dust
And death, where they are neither gods
nor men.

Talk not of such to me! the worms are
gods; 269

At least they banqueted upon your gods,
And died for lack of further nutriment.
Those gods were merely men; look to their issue—

I feel a thousand mortal things about me,
But nothing godlike,—unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a dis-
position 275

To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that's
human)

To be indulgent to my own.

Sal. Alas!
The doom of Nineveh is seal'd.—Woe—
woe

To the unrivall'd city!

Sar. What dost dread?
Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a
few hours 281

The tempest may break out which over-
whelms thee,

And thine and mine; and in another day
What is shall be the past of Belus' race.

Sar. What must we dread?

Sal. Ambitious treachery,
Which has environ'd thee with snares; but
yet 286

There is resource: empower me with thy
signet

To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.

Sar. The heads—how many?

Sal. Must I stay to number
When even thine own 's in peril? Let me go;
Give me thy signet—trust me with the rest.

Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited
lives.

When we take those from others, we nor
know

What we have taken, nor the thing we
give. 295

Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives
who seek for thine?

Sar. That's a hard question—But I
answer, Yes.

Cannot the thing be done without? Who
are they

Whom thou suspectest?—Let them be
arrested.

Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me;
the next moment 300

Will send my answer through thy babbling
troop

Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the
palace,

Even to the city, and so baffle all.—

Trust me.

Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever;
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*]

Sal. I have one more request. 305
Sar. Name it.

Sal. That thou this night forbear the
banquet

In the pavilion over the Euphrates.

Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all
the plotters

That ever shook a kingdom! Let them
come,

And do their worst: I shall not blench for
them; 310

Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the gob-
let;

Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour.—I fear them
not.

Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst
thou not, if needful?

Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest ar-
mour, and 315

A sword of such a temper; and a bow
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod
forth:

A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on't, 'tis long since I've
used them,

Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them,
brother? 320

Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic
trifling?—

If need be, wilt thou wear them?

Sar. Will I not?
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I'll use the
sword

Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.

Sal. They say thy sceptre's turn'd to
that already. 326

Sar. That's false! but let them say so:
the old Greeks,

Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,

Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou
seest 330

The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sove-
reigns.

Sal. They did not speak thus of thy
fathers.

Sar. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil
and combat;

And never changed their chains but for
their armour: 335

Now they have peace and pastime, and the
licence

To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl

For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank
tongues 340

Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feed-
ing,

That I should prize their noisy praise, or
dread

Their noisome clamour?

Sal. You have said they are men;
As such their hearts are something.

Sar. So my dogs' are;
And better, as more faithful:—but, pro-
ceed; 345

Thou hast my signet:—since they are
tumultuous,

Let them be temper'd, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,

Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,

Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen, 352

By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life:

But this they know not, or they will not
know. 355

I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe
them:

I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,

I let them pass their days as best might suit
them: 359

Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore

They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sar. They lie.—Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king in-
stead. 365

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who
seeks to be so.

Sar. What mean'st thou?—'tis thy
secret; thou desirest

Few questions, and I'm not of curious
nature.

Take the fit steps; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee.

Ne'er 370

Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only: if they rouse me, better

They had conjured up stern Nimrod from
his ashes,

'The mighty hunter.' I will turn these
realms

To one wide desert chase of brutes, who
were, 375

But would no more, by their own choice,
be human.

What they have found me, they belie; that
which

They yet may find me—shall defy their
wish

To speak it worse; and let them thank
themselves. 379

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?

Sar. Feel! who feels not
Ingratitude?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake
that energy

Which sleeps at times, but is not dead with-
in thee,

And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy
reign, 384

As powerful in thy realm. Farewell!
[Exit SALEMENES.

Sar. [solus]. Farewell!

He's gone; and on his finger bears my sig-
net,

Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve

To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not: he hath found it, let him quell
it. 390

Must I consume my life—this little life—
In guarding against all may make it less?

It is not worth so much! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,

Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,
Because they are near; and all who are
remote, 396

Because they are far. But if it should be
so—

If they should sweep me off from earth and
empire,

Why, what is earth or empire of the earth?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my
image; 400

To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay! 'Tis true I have not shed

Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death—

A terror and a trophy. But for this 405

I feel no penitence; my life is love:
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.

Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest
coin

Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been
lavish'd 410

On objects which could cost her sons a
tear:

If then they hate me, 'tis because I hate not:
If they rebel, 'tis because I oppress not.

Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes,
not sceptres,

And mow'd down like the grass, else all we
reap 415

Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,

Making a desert of fertility.—
I'll think no more.—Within there, ho!

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we could crave her
presence. 420
Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA enters.

Sar. [apart to Attendant]. Away!
[Addressing MYRRHA]. Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throb'd for thee, and here thou comest:
let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some
sweet oracle,
Communicates between us, though un-
seen, 425
In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sar. I know there doth, but not its
name:
What is it?

Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 'tis only mortal; 430
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy—
That is, it would be happy; but—

[MYRRHA pauses.]

Sar. There comes
For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness: let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is seal'd.

Myr. My lord! My lord!

Sar. My lord—my king—sire—sove-
reign; thus it is— 437
For ever thus, address'd with awe. I ne'er
can see a smile, unless in some broad
banquet's

Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaff'd me down to their abase-
ment. 442

Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these
names,
Lord—king—sire—monarch—nay, time
was I prized them;

That is, I suffer'd them—from slaves and
nobles; 445

But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been press'd to mine,
a chill

Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the
falsehood

Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and
makes me 450

Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee, and wear no crowns but those
of flowers.

Myr. Would that we could!

Sar. And dost thou feel this?—Why?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what
thou canst never know. 455

Sar. And that is—

Myr. The true value of a heart;
At least, a woman's.

Sar. I have proved a thousand—
A thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts?

Sar. I think so.

Myr. Not one! the time may come thou
may'st.

Sar. It will. 459
Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared—
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more
than I—

But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.

Myr. He did well.

Sar. And say'st thou so?
Thou whom he spurn'd so harshly, and
now dared 465

Drive from our presence with his savage
jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?

Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spak'st of
peril—

Peril to thee—

Sar. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes—and discontented troops
and nations, 471

I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man—it is his usual
custom.

But he is honest. Come, we'll think no
more on't— 475

But of the midnight festival.

Myr. 'Tis time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast
not

Spurn'd his sage cautions?

Sar. What?—and dost thou fear?
Myr. Fear!—I'm a Greek, and how
should I fear death?

A slave, and wherefore should I dread my
freedom? 480

Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so
pale?

Myr. I love.

Sar. And do not I? I love thee far—far
more

Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced;—yet I
blench not.

Myr. That means thou lovest nor thy-
self nor me; 485

For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost.

Sar. Lost!—why, who is the aspiring
chief who dared 489

Assume to win them?

Myr. Who is he should dread

To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?

Sar. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me; you have
smiled 493

Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment

Which they may augur.—King, I am your
subject!

Master, I am your slave! Man, I have
loved you!—

Loved you, I know not by what fatal weak-
ness,

Although a Greek, and born a foe to
monarchs— 499

A slave, and hating fetters—an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger,

more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!

Still I have loved you. If that love were
strong

Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sar. Save me, my beauty! Thou art
very fair, 506

And what I seek of thee is love—not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells
security?

Sar. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's
breast, 510

Your first small words are taught you from
her lips,

Your first tears quench'd by her, and your
last sighs

Too often breathed out in a woman's hear-
ing,

When men have shrunk from the ignoble
care

Of watching the last hour of him who led
them. 515

Sar. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st
music;

The very chorus of the tragic song
I have heard thee talk of as the favourite
pastime

Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not—
calm thee.

Myr. I weep not.—But I pray thee, do
not speak 520

About my fathers or their land.

Sar. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.

Myr. True—true: constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;

But when another speaks of Greece, it
wounds me.

Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou save
me, as thou saidst? 525

Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself,
and not

Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from
all

The rage of the worst war—the war of
brethren.

Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war and
warriors; 529

I live in peace and pleasure: what can man
Do more?

Myr. Alas! my lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep

The substance of sweet peace; and, for a
king,

'Tis sometimes better to be fear'd than lov'd.

Sar. And I have never sought but for
the last. 535

Myr. And now art neither.

Sar. Dost thou say so, Myrrha?

Myr. I speak of civic popular love, self-
love,

Which means that men are kept in awe
and law,

Yet not oppress'd—at least they must not
think so, 539

Or if they think so, deem it necessary,
To ward off worse oppression, their own
passions.

A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and
revel,

And love, and mirth, was never king of
glory.

Sar. Glory! what's that?

Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.

Sar. They cannot answer; when the
priests speak for them, 545

'Tis for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine em-
pire's founders.

Sar. They are so blotted o'er with
blood, I cannot.

But what wouldst have? the empire *has*
been founded.

I cannot go on multiplying empires. 550

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.

Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Eu-
phrates:

The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, deck'd for our return,

In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, un-
til 556

It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crown'd with fresh flowers like—

Myr. Victims.

Sar. No, like sovereigns,
The shepherd kings of patriarchal times,

Who knew no brighter gems than summer
wreaths, 561

And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. May the king live for ever!

Sar. Not an hour
Longer than he can love. How my soul
hates

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT I

This language, which makes life itself a lie,
Flattering dust with eternity! Well, Pania!
Be brief.

Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king, 568
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace: when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will war-
rant 571
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

Sar. What! am I then coop'd?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Saleme-
nes, 575
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pan. I must obey you, and yet—
Myr. Oh, monarch, listen.—
How many a day and moon thou hast re-
clined
Within these palace walls in silken dalli-
ance, 580
And never shown thee to thy people's long-
ing;

Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontroll'd, the gods un-
worshipp'd,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumber'd through the
realm! 585
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day,—
A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou
not

Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past fathers'
race,
And for thy sons' inheritance?

Pan. 'Tis true!
From the deep urgency with which the
prince 591
Despatch'd me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.

Sar. No, it must not be.
Myr. For the sake of thy realm!
Sar. Away!

Pan. For that
Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.

Sar. These are mere fantasies:
There is no peril:—'tis a sullen scheme
Salemenes, to approve his zeal, 599
To show himself more necessary to us.

By all that's good and glorious
In this counsel.

Sar. To-morrow.
Myr. Ay, or death to-night.
Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly,
'Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and
love; 605
So let me fall like the pluck'd rose!—far
better

Thus than be wither'd.

Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
Even for the sake of all that ever stirr'd
A monarch into action, to forego 608
A trifling revel.

Sar. No.
Myr. Then yield for mine;
For my sake!

Sar. Thine, my Myrrha!
Myr. 'Tis the first
Boon which I ever ask'd Assyria's king.

Sar. That's true, and were't my king-
dom, must be granted.
Well, for thysake, I yield me. Pania, hence!
Thou hear'st me.

Pan. And obey. [Exit PANIA.
Sar. I marvel at thee.

What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge
me? 615
Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that
nought

Could urge the prince thy kinsman to re-
quire
Thus much from thee, but some impending
danger.

Sar. And if I do not dread it, why
shouldst thou?

Myr. Because thou dost not fear, I fear
for thee. 620
Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these
vain fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where
none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou?

Sar. I shall be king, as heretofore.
Myr. Where?

Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semira-
mis, 625
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am—may make me
nothing—

But either that or nothing must I be:
I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare de-
grade thee. 630
Sar. And who will do so now?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none?
Sar. Suspect!—that's a spy's office.
Oh! we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain
words,

And vainer fears. Within there!—ye
slaves, deck 634
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel:
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we'll wear our fetters jocularly;
If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer dwelling on its beauteous
border, 639
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within
there! [Exit SARDANAPALUS.

Myr. [sola]. Why do I love this man?
My country's daughters

Love none but heroes. But I have no country!

The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him;

And that's the heaviest link of the long chain— 644

To love whom we esteem not. Be it so; The hour is coming when he'll need all love,

And find none. To fall from him now were baser

Than to have stabb'd him on his throne when highest

Would have been noble in my country's creed:

I was not made for either. Could I save him, 650

I should not love *him* better, but myself; And I have need of the last, for I have fallen

In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger:

And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving 654

That he is hated of his own barbarians, The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.

Could I but wake a single thought like those Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long

'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart He would tread down the barbarous

crowds, and triumph. 660

He loves me, and I love him; the slave loves

Her master, and would free him from his vices.

If not, I have a means of freedom still, And if I cannot teach him how to reign,

May show him how alone a king can leave His throne. I must not lose him from my sight.

[Exit.]

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.*

Beleses [solus]. The sun goes down: methinks he sets more slowly,

Taking his last look of Assyria's empire. How red he glares amongst those deepening

clouds, Like the blood he predicts! If not in vain,

Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise, 5

I have outwatch'd ye, reading ray by ray The edicts of your orbs, which make Time

tremble For what he brings the nations, 'tis the furthest

Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm!

An earthquake should announce so great a fall— 10

A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk, To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon

Its everlasting page the end of what Seem'd everlasting; but oh! thou true sun!

The burning oracle of all that live, 15

As fountain of all life, and symbol of Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou

limit Thy lore unto calamity? Why not

Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine All-glorious burst from ocean? why not

dart 20 A beam of hope athwart the future years, As of wrath to its days? Hear me! oh, hear me!

I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant—

I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall, And bow'd my head beneath thy mid-day

beams, 25

When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch'd

For thee, and after thee, and pray'd to thee, And sacrificed to thee, and read, and fear'd

thee, And ask'd of thee, and thou hast answer'd

—but Only to thus much: while I speak, he

sinks— 30

Is gone—and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,

To the delighted west, which revels in Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is

Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset; And mortals may be happy to resemble

The gods but in decay.

Enter ARBACES by an inner door.

Arb. Beleses, why 36

So rapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand Gazing to trace thy disappearing god

Into some realm of undiscover'd day? Our business is with night—'tis come.

Bel. But not Gone.

Arb. Let it roll on—we are ready. 39

Bel. Yes. Would it were over!

Arb. Does the prophet doubt, To whom the very stars shine victory?

Bel. I do not doubt of victory—but the victor.

Arb. Well, let thy science settle that Meantime 45

I have prepared as many glittering spears As will out-sparkle our allies—your

ets. There is no more to thwart us.

king, That less than woman, is even upon

The waters with his female: order 50

Is issued for the feast in the pavilion. The first cup which he drains will be the

last Quaff'd by the line of Nimrod.

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT II

Bel. 'Twas a brave one.
Arb. And is a weak one—'tis worn out
 —we'll mend it. 54

Bel. Art sure of that?
Arb. Its founder was a hunter—
 I am a soldier—what is there to fear?
Bel. The soldier.
Arb. And the priest, it may be: but
 If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
 Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
 Why spur me to this enterprise? your own
 No less than mine?
Bel. Look to the sky!
Arb. I look.
Bel. What seest thou?
Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
 The gathering of the stars.
Bel. And midst them, mark
 Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so
 quivers, 64
 As it would quit its place in the blue ether.
Arb. Well!
Bel. 'Tis thy natal ruler—thy birth
 planet.
Arb. [touching his scabbard]. My star is
 in this scabbard: when it shines,
 It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
 Of what is to be done to justify
 Thy planets and their portents. When we
 conquer, 70
 They shall have temples—ay, and priests
 —and thou
 Shalt be the pontiff of—what gods thou wilt;
 For I observe that they are ever just,
 And own the bravest for the most devout.
Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave
 —thou hast not 75
 Seen me turn back from battle.
Arb. No; I own thee
 As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
 As skilful in Chaldea's worship: now,
 Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
 And be the warrior?
Bel. Why not both?
Arb. The better;
 And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
 So little to effect. This woman's warfare
 Degrades the very conqueror. To have
 pluck'd 83
 A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
 And grappled with him, clashing steel with
 steel,
 That were heroic or to win or fall;
 But to upraise my sword against this silk-
 worm, 87
 And hear him whine, it may be—
Bel. Do not deem it:
 He has that in him which may make you
 strive yet;
 And were he all you think, his guards are
 hardy, 90
 And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.
Arb. They'll not resist.
Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.

Arb. True,
 And therefore need a soldier to command
 them.
Bel. That Salemenes is.
Arb. But not their king.
 Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that
 governs, 95
 For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you
 not
 He keeps aloof from all the revels?
Bel. But
 Not from the council—there he is ever con-
 stant.
Arb. And ever thwarted: what would
 you have more
 To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning,
 His blood dishonour'd, and himself dis-
 dain'd: 101
 Why, it is his revenge we work for.
Bel. Could
 He but be brought to think so: this I doubt
 of.
Arb. What, if we sound him?
Bel. Yes—if the time served.

Enter BALEA.
Bal. Satraps! The king commands your
 presence at 105
 The feast to-night.
Bel. To hear is to obey.
 In the pavilion?
Bal. No; here in the palace.
Arb. How! in the palace? it was not
 thus order'd.
Bal. It is so order'd now.
Arb. And why?
Bal. I know not.
 May I retire?
Arb. Stay.
Bel. [to *Arb.* aside]. Hush! let him go his
 way. 110
 [Alternately to *Bal.*]. Yes, Balea, thank the
 monarch, kiss the hem
 Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
 Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter
 from
 His royal table at the hour—was't mid-
 night?
Bal. It was: the place, the hall of Nim-
 rod. Lords, 115
 I humble me before you, and depart,
 Exit BALEA.
Arb. I like not this same sudden change
 of place;
 There is some mystery: wherefore should
 he change it?
Bel. Doth he not change a thousand
 times a day?
 Sloth is of all things the most fanciful—
 And moves more parasangs in its intents
 Than generals in their marches, when
 they seek
 To leave their foe at fault.—Why dost thou
 muse?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion,—it
was ever
His summer dotage. 124

Bel. And he loved his queen—
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides—
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.

Arb. Still—I like it not.
If he has changed—why, so must we: the
attack

Were easy in the isolated bower, 130
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken
courtiers;

But in the hall of Nimrod—

Bel. Is it so?
Methought the haughty soldier fear'd to
mount 133

A throne too easily—does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on?

Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake—and gaily
play'd for:

But here's more upon the die—a kingdom.

Bel. I have foretold already—thou wilt
win it: 140

Then on, and prosper.

Arb. Now were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obey'd—I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's
here? 144

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps!

Bel. My prince!

Sal. Well met—I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.

Arb. Wherefore so?

Sal. 'Tis not the hour.

Arb. The hour!—what hour?

Sal. Of midnight.

Bel. Midnight, my lord!

Sal. What, are you not invited?

Bel. Oh! yes—we had forgotten.

Sal. Is it usual
Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation?

Arb. Why—we but now received it.

Sal. Then why here?

Arb. On duty.

Sal. On what duty?

Bel. On the state's.

We have the privilege to approach the
presence; 153

But found the monarch absent.

Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.

Arb. May we crave its purport?

Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards!
Within there!

Enter Guards.

Sal. [continuing]. Satraps,

Your swords.

Bel. [delivering his]. My lord, behold
my scimitar.

Arb. [drawing his sword]. Take mine.

Sal. [advancing]. I will.

Arb. But in your heart the blade—

The hilt quits not this hand.

Sal. [drawing]. How! dost thou brave
me?

'Tis well—this saves a trial, and false
mercy. 160

Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

Arb. Soldiers! Ay—

Alone you dare not.

Sal. Alone! foolish slave—

What is there in thee that a prince should
shrink from

Of open force? We dread thy treason, not

Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without
its venom— 165

The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him
down.

Bel. [interposing]. Arbaces! are you
mad? Have I not render'd

My sword? Then trust like me our sove-
reign's justice.

Arb. No—I will sooner trust the stars
thou prat'st of, 169

And this slight arm, and die a king at least
Of my own breath and body—so far that

None else shall chain them.

Sal. [to the guards]. You hear him and
me.

Take him not,—kill.

[The Guards attack ARBACES, who de-
fends himself valiantly and dexter-
ously till they waver.

Sal. Is it even so; and must
I do the hangman's office? Recreants! see

How you should fell a traitor.

[SALEMENES attacks ARBACES.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Train.

Sar. Hold your hands—
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or

drunken? 176

My sword! O fool, I wear no sword: here,
fellow,

Give me thy weapon. [To a Guard.

[SARDANAPALUS snatches a sword from
one of the soldiers, and rushes between
the combatants—they separate.

Sar. In my very palace!
What hinders me from cleaving you in

twain, 179

Audacious brawlers?

Bel. Sire, your justice.

Sal. Or—

Your weakness.

Sar. [raising the sword]. How?

Sal. Strike! so the blow's repeated
Upon yon traitor—whom you spare a

moment,
I trust, for torture—I'm content.

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT II

Sar. What—him!
Who dares assail Arbaces?

Sal. II
Sar. Indeed!
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what
warrant? 185

Sal. [showing the signet]. Thine.
Arb. [confused]. The king's!

Sal. Yes! and let the king confirm it.

Sar. I parted not from this for such a
purpose.

Sal. You parted with it for your safety
—I

Employ'd it for the best. Pronounce in
person.

Here I am but your slave—a moment past
I was your representative. 191

Sar. Then sheathe
Your swords.

[ARBACES and SALEMENES return
their swords to the scabbards.

Sal. Mine's sheathed: I pray you
sheathe not yours:

'Tis the sole sceptre left you now with
safety.

Sar. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts
my hand.

[To a Guard]. Here, fellow, take thy
weapon back. Well, sirs, 195

What doth this mean?

Bel. The prince must answer that.

Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon
theirs.

Sar. Treason—Arbaces! treachery and
Belezes!

That were an union I will not believe.
Bel. Where is the proof?

Sal. I'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow-traitor's
sword. 201

Arb. [to *Sal.*] A sword which hath been
drawn as oft as thine

Against his foes.

Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.

Sar. That is not possible: he dared not;
no— 205

No—I'll not hear of such things.—These
vain bickerings

Are spawn'd in courts by base intrigues,
and baser

Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's
lives.

You must have been deceived, my brother.

Sal. First

Let him deliver up his weapon, and
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.

Sar. Why, if I thought so—

But no, it cannot be: the Mede Arbaces—
The trusty, rough, true soldier—the best
captain 214

Of all who discipline our nations—No,
I'll not insult him thus, to bid him render

The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your
weapon. 218

Sal. [delivering back the signet]. Mon-
arch, take back your signet.

Sar. No, retain it;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire,

I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.

Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sar. So I should:

He never ask'd it.
Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,

Without that hollow semblance of respect.
Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced
the prince 226

So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than
whom none

Have been more zealous for Assyria's
weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless
soldier! thou 229

Unitest in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.

Keep thy smooth words and juggling
homilies

For those who know thee not. Thy fel-
low's sin 233

Is, at the least, a bold one, and not temper'd
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,

My liege—the son of Belus! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the
knee 237

Before your fathers.

Sar. Oh! for that I pray you

Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men; feeling that I

Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are—what I see
them—ashes. 242

Bel. King! do not deem so: they are
with the stars,

Sar. You shall join them ere they will
rise,

If you preach further.—Why, *this* is rank
treason. 245

Sal. My lord!

Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols! Let him be released—
Give him his sword.

Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,
I pray ye pause.

Sar. Yes, and be sermonised,
And dinn'd, and deafen'd with dead men
and Baal, 250

And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.
Bel. Monarch! respect them.

Sar. Oh! for that—I love them;

I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's
eyes;

SCENE I]

SARDANAPALUS

I love to see their rays redoubled in 255
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the
broad

And rolling water, sighing through the
sedges

Which fringe his banks: but whether they
may be 259

Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds, or the lights of worlds, I know nor
care not.

There's something sweet in my uncer-
tainty 263

I would not change for your Chaldean lore;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it—nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty—
When they shine on my grave I shall know
neither.

Bel. For neither, sire, say better.

Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that know-
ledge. 270

In the mean time receive your sword, and
know

That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry—not loving either.

Sal. [*aside*]. His lusts have made him
mad. Then must I save him,
Spite of himself.

Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I
doubt thee 276
More than the soldier; and would doubt
thee all

Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace—I'll not say pardon—which
must be

Earn'd by the guilty; this I'll not pro-
nounce ye, 280

Although upon this breath of mine de-
pends

Your own; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not—for that I am soft, not fear-
ful—

And so live on. Were I the thing some
think me,

Your heads would now be dripping the last
drops 285

Of their attained gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crown'd to reign o'er—let
that pass. 289

As I have said, I will not deem ye guilty,
Nor doom ye guiltless. Albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you;
And should I leave your fate to sterner
judges,

And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatso'er they now are,
were 295

Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.

Arb. Sire, this clemency—

Bel. [*interrupting him*]. Is worthy of
yourself; and, although innocent,

We thank—

Sar. Priest! keep your thanksgivings
for Belus;

His offspring needs none.

Bel. But being innocent—

Sar. Be silent.—Guilt is loud. If ye are
loyal, 300

Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not
grateful.

Bel. So we should be, were justice
always done

By earthly power omnipotent; but inno-
cence

Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.

Sar. That's a good sentence for a
homily, 305

Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep
it

To plead thy sovereign's cause before his
people.

Bel. I trust there is no cause.

Sar. No cause, perhaps;

But many causers:—if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function
On earth, or should you read of it in
heaven 311

In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth
and heaven

Than him who ruleth many and slays
none; 315

And, hating not himself, yet loves his
fellows

Enough to spare even those who would not
spare him

Were they once masters—but that's doubt-
ful. Satraps!

Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will—but from this hour

I have no call for either. Salemenes!

Follow me.

[*Exeunt SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES,
and the Train, &c., leaving ARBACES
and BELESES.*]

Arb. Beleses!

Bel. Now, what think you?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What? thus suspected—with the
sword slung o'er us 324

But by a single hair, and that still wavering,
To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us—why, I know not.

Bel. Seek not why;

But let us profit by the interval.

The hour is still our own—our power the
same—

The night the same we destined. He hath
changed 330

Nothing except our ignorance of all

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT II

Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.

Arb. And yet—
Bel. What, doubting still?

Arb. He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salemenes.

Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken
minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it
nobly;

Gave royalty what we had forfeited
Basely—

Bel. Say bravely.

Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps,
But it has touch'd me, and, whate'er be-
tide,

I will no further on.

Bel. And lose the world!
Arb. Lose anything except my own
esteem.

Bel. I blush that we should owe our
lives to such
A king of distaffs!

Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the
grantor's!

Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou
wilt—the stars
Have written otherwise.

Arb. Though they came down,
And marshall'd me the way in all their
brightness,

I would not follow.

Bel. This is weakness—worse
Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the
dead,

And waking in the dark.—Go to—go to.

Arb. Methought he look'd like Nimrod
as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the
temple.

Bel. I told you that you had too much
despised him,

And that there was some royalty within
him—

What then? he is the nobler foe.

Arb. But we
The meaner.—Would he had not spared
us!

Bel. So—
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily?

Arb. No—but it had been better to have
died

Than live ungrateful.

Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
Thou wouldst digest what some call trea-
son, and

Fools treachery—and, behold, upon the
sudden,

Because for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,

'Twixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turn'd
Into—what shall I say?—Sardanapalus!

I know no name more ignominious.

Arb. But
An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly—as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave
us—

Semiramis herself would not have done it.

Bel. No—the queen liked no sharers of
the kingdom,

Not even a husband.

Arb. I must serve him truly—
Bel. And humbly?

Arb. No, sir, proudly—being honest.
I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;
And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.

You may do your own deeming—you have
codes,

And mysteries, and corollaries of

Right and wrong, which I lack for my
direction,

And must pursue but what a plain heart
teaches.

And now you know me.

Bel. Have you finish'd?

Arb. Yes—

With you.

Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?

Arb. That's a sacerdotal thought

And not a soldier's.

Bel. Be it what you will—
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear
me.

Arb. No—
There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.

Bel. If it must be so—
I'll on alone.

Arb. Alone!

Bel. Thrones hold but one.

Arb. But this is fill'd.

Bel. With worse than vacancy—
A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces:

I have still aided, cherish'd, loved, and
urged you;

Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seem'd to consent, and all events were
friendly

Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness; but now, rather
Than see my country languish, I will be
Her saviour or the victim of her tyrant,

Or one or both, for sometimes both are one;
And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.

Arb. Your servant!
Bel. Why not? better than be slave,
The pardon'd slave of *she* Sardanapalus!

Enter PANIA.

Pan. My lords, I bear an order from the
king.

Arb. It is obey'd ere spoken.
Bel. Notwithstanding,
 Let's hear it.

Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,
 Repair to your respective satrapies 408
 Of Babylon and Media.

Bel. With our troops?
Pan. My order is unto the satraps and
 Their household train.

Arb. But——
Bel. It must be obey'd:

Say, we depart.
Pan. My order is to see you
 Depart, and not to bear your answer.

Bel. [aside]. Ay!
 Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.

Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the
 guard 415
 Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
 Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.
 [Exit PANIA.]

Bel. Now then obey!

Arb. Doubtless.

Bel. Yes, to the gates
 That grate the palace, which is now our
 prison— 419
 No further.

Arb. Thou hast harp'd the truth indeed!
 The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
 Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and
 me.

Bel. Graves!

Arb. If I thought so, this good
 sword should dig 423
 One more than mine.

Bel. It shall have work enough.
 Let me hope better than thou augured;
 At present, let us hence as best we may.
 Thou dost agree with me in understanding
 This order as a sentence?

Arb. Why, what other
 Interpretation should it bear? it is
 The very policy of orient monarchs— 430
 Pardon and poison—favours and a
 sword—

A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.
 How many satraps in his father's time—
 For he I own is, or at least was, bloodless—

Bel. But will not, can not be so now.

Arb. I doubt it.
 How many satraps have I seen set out
 In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
 Whose tombs are on their path! I know
 not how,

But they all sicken'd by the way, it was
 So long and heavy.

Bel. Let us but regain 440
 The free air of the city, and we'll shorten
 The journey.

Arb. 'Twill be shorten'd at the gates,
 It may be.

Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
 They mean us to die privately, but not
 Within the palace or the city walls, 445

Where we are known, and may have par-
 tisans:

If they had meant to slay us here, we were
 No longer with the living. Let us hence.

Arb. If I but thought he did not mean
 my life——

Bel. Fool! hence—what else should
 despotism alarm'd 450

Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and
 march.

Arb. Towards our provinces?

Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
 There's time, there's heart, and hope, and
 power, and means, 453

Which their half measures leave us in full
 scope.—

Away!

Arb. And I even yet repenting must

Relapse to guilt!

Bel. Self-defence is a virtue, 456
 Sole bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
 Let's leave this place, the air grows thick
 and choking,

And the walls have a scent of night-shade
 —hence!

Let us not leave them time for further
 council. 460

Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
 Our quick departure hinders our good
 escort,

The worthy Pania, from anticipating
 The orders of some parasangs from hence:

Nay, there 's no other choice, but—hence,
 I say. 465

[Exit with ARBACES, who follows re-
 luctantly.]

Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without
 bloodshed,

That worst of mockeries of a remedy;
 We are now secure by these men's exile.

Sal. Yes,
 As he who treads on flowers is from the
 adder 469

Twined round their roots.

Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do?

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sar. Revoke my pardon?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering
 on your temples.

Sar. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sar. We are so.

What danger can they work upon the
 frontier?

Sal. They are not there yet—never
 should they be so, 475

Were I well listen'd to.

Sar. Nay, I have listen'd
 Impartially to thee—why not to them?

Sal. You may know that hereafter; as
 it is,

I take my leave to order forth the guard.

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT II

Sal. And you will join us at the banquet?

Sal. Dispense with me—I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the Bac-
chant's. 482

Sal. Nay, but 'tis fit to revel now and then.

Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who revel
Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?

Sal. Yes—Stay a moment, my good Salemenes,

My brother, my best subject, better prince Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,

And I—I know not what, and care not; but Think not I am insensible to all 490
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,

Though oft reproving, sufferance of my follies.

If I have spared these men against thy counsel,

That is, their lives—it is not that I doubt The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not 495

Cavil about their lives—so let them mend them.

Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,

Which their death had not left me.

Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors— A moment's pang now changed for years of crime. 500

Still let them be made quiet.

Sal. Tempt me not; My word is past.

Sal. But it may be recall'd.

Sal. 'Tis royal.

Sal. And should therefore be decisive. This half indulgence of an exile serves But to provoke—a pardon should be full, Or it is none.

Sal. And who persuaded me 506
After I had repeal'd them, or at least Only dismiss'd them from our presence, who

Urged me to send them to their satrapies?

Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, sire, 510

If they e'er reach'd their satrapies—why, then,

Reprove me more for my advice.

Sal. And if They do not reach them—look to it!—in safety,

In safety, mark me—and security— 514
Look to thine own.

Sal. Permit me to depart; Their safety shall be cared for.

Sal. Get thee hence, then; And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.

Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign. [Exit SALEMENES.

Sal. [solus]. That man is of a temper too severe; 519

Hard but as lofty as the rock, and free From all the taints of common earth— while I 521

Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers: But as our mould is, must the produce be. If I have err'd this time, 'tis on the side

Where error sits most lightly on that sense, I know not what to call it; but it reckons

With me oft times for pain, and sometimes pleasure; 527

A spirit which seems placed about my heart To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask

Questions which mortal never dared to ask me, 530

Nor Baal, though an oracular deity— Albeit his marble face majestical

Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim His brows to changed expression, till at times

I think the statue looks in act to speak. Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous— 536

And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,

In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show 539

In forked flashes a commanding tempest. Will you then quit the palace?

Sal. Tempest, say'st thou?

Sal. Ay, my good lord.

Sal. For my own part, I should be Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,

And watch the warring elements; but this Would little suit the silk'n garments and Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha, 546

Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices

As auguries of Jove.

Sal. Jove!—ay, your Baal— Ours also has a property in thunder, 550

And ever and anon some falling bolt Proves his divinity,—and yet sometimes Strikes his own altars.

Myr. That were a dread omen.

Sal. Yes—for the priests. Well, we will not go forth

Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make 555

Our feast within.

Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The gods

SCENE I]

Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
And flash this storm between thee and thy
foes, 559
To shield thee from them.

Sar. Child, if there be peril,
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.

Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason
has 563

To penetrate through many a winding way,
And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.

Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle
sits

Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be:
Even as the arrow finds the airy king,
The steel will reach the earthly. But be
calm; 571

The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banish'd, and far upon their way.

Myr. They live, then?

Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*

Myr. I would not shrink
From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life: were't other-
wise, 576

I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.

Sar. This is strange;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.

Myr. 'Tis a Greek virtue.

Sar. But not a kingly one—I'll none
on't; or 581

If ever I indulge in't, it shall be
With kings—my equals.

Myr. These men sought to be so.

Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and
springs
From fear—

Myr. For you.

Sar. No matter, still 'tis fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to
wrath, 586

Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance, which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as
from

The childish helplessness of Asian women.

Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my
love, 591

Nor of my attributes; I have shared your
splendour,
And will partake your fortunes. You may
live

To find one slave more true than subject
myriads: 594

But this the gods avert! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs,
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

SARDANAPALUS

Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect
love exists, 599
Except to heighten it, and vanish from
That which it could not scare away. Let's

The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our
feast. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Hall of the Palace illuminated—SARDANAPALUS and his Guests at Table.—A storm without, and Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.*

Sar. Fill full! why this is as it should be:
here

Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and
faces

Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.
Zam. Nor elsewhere—where the king
is, pleasure sparkles.

Sar. Is not this better now than Nim-
rod's huntings, 5
Or my wild grandam's chase in search of
kingdoms

She could not keep when conquer'd?

Alt. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of these who went before have
reach'd

The acmé of Sardanapalus, who 10
Has placed his joy in peace—the sole true
glory.

Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to
which glory

Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to
it,

And not gone tracking it through human
ashes, 15

Making a grave with every footstep.

Zam. No;
All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in
jubilee.

Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard
otherwise; 19

Some say that there be traitors.

Zam. Traitors they
Who dare to say so!—'Tis impossible.
What cause?

Sar. What cause? true,—fill the
goblet up;

We will not think of them: there are none
such,

Or if there be, they are gone.

Alt. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure
to 25

The safety of the king—the monarch, say I?
The god Sardanapalus!

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT III

[*ZAMES and the Guests kneel, and exclaim—*

Mightier than His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!
[*It thunders as they kneel; some start up in confusion.*

Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong peal 29

His father gods consented.

Myr. Menaced, rather. King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?

Sar. Impiety!—nay, if the sires who reign'd

Before me can be gods, I'll not disgrace Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends; Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there: 35

I seek but to be loved, not worshipp'd.

Alt. Both—

Both you must ever be by all true subjects.

Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase: it is

An awful night.

Myr. Oh yes, for those who have No palace to protect their worshippers.

Sar. That's true, my Myrrha; and could I convert 41

My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched, I'd do it.

Myr. Thou'rt no god then, not to be Able to work a will so good and general, As thy wish would imply.

Sar. And your gods, then, Who can, and do not?

Myr. Do not speak of that, Lest we provoke them.

Sar. True, they love not censure Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me: 48

Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be

Air worshippers? that is, when it is angry, And pelting as even now.

Myr. The Persian prays Upon his mountain.

Sar. Yes, when the sun shines.

Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were 53

Unroof'd and desolate, how many flatterers Would lick the dust in which the king lay low?

Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic Upon a nation whom she knows not well; The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's, 58

And homage is their pride.

Sar. Nay, pardon, guests, The fair Greek's readiness of speech.

Alt. Pardon! sire:

We honour her of all things next to thee. Hark! what was that?

Zam. That! nothing but the jar Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

Alt. It sounded like the clash of—hark again! 64

Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.

Sar. No more. Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?

Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st, Who in thy country threw—

Enter PANIA, with his sword and garments bloody, and disordered. The guests rise in confusion.

Pan. [to the Guards]. Look to the portals; And with your best speed to the walls without.

Your arms! To arms! The king's in danger. Monarch, 70

Excuse this haste,—'tis faith.

Sar. Speak on. *Pan.* It is

As Salemenes fear'd; the faithless satraps—

Sar. You are wounded—give some wine. Take breath, good Pania.

Pan. 'Tis nothing—a mere flesh wound. I am worn 75

More with my speed to warn my sovereign, Than hurt in his defence.

Myr. Well, sir, the rebels? *Pan.* Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reach'd

Their stations in the city, they refused To march; and on my attempt to use the power 79

Which I was delegated with, they call'd Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.

Myr. All?

Pan. Too many. *Sar.* Spare not of thy free speech, To spare mine ears the truth.

Pan. My own slight guard Were faithful, and what's left of it is still so. 84

Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?

Pan. No— The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes, Who even then was on his way, still urged By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs, Are numerous, and make strong head against

The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming 90

An orb around the palace, where they mean To centre all their force, and save the king. [He hesitates]. I am charged to—

Myr. 'Tis no time for hesitation.

Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king

To arm himself, although but for a moment, 95

And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instance might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.

Sar. What, ho!
My armour there.

Myr. And wilt thou?
Sar. Will I not?

Ho, there!—but seek not for the buckler:
'tis 100

Too heavy:—a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?

Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest con-
flict rages.

Sar. Then I may charge on horseback.
Sfero, ho!

Order my horse out.—There is space
enough 105

Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.

[*Exit SFERO for the armour.*
Myr. How I do love thee!

Sar. I ne'er doubted it.
Myr. But now I know thee.

Sar. [to his Attendant]. Bring down
my spear too.— 109

Where's *Salemenes*?

Pan. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.

Sar. Then hasten to him—Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?

Pan. 'Twas
When I late left him, and I have no fear:
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx
form'd. 115

Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the
present,
And that I will not spare my own—and say,
I come.

Pan. There's victory in the very word.
[*Exit PANIA.*

Sar. *Altada*—*Zames*—forth, and arm
ye! There

Is all in readiness in the armoury. 120
See that the women are bestow'd in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives—command
it, *Zames*. 124

Altada, arm yourself, and return here;
Your post is near our person.

[*Exeunt ZAMES, ALTADA, and all save
MYRRHA.*

*Enter SFERO and others with the King's
Arms, &c.*

Sfe. King! your armour.

Sar. [arming himself]. Give me the
cuirass—so; my baldric; now

My sword: I had forgot the helm—where
is it?

That's well—no, 'tis too heavy: you mis-
take, too—

It was not this I meant, but that which
bears 130

A diadem around it.

Sfe. Sire, I deem'd
That too conspicuous from the precious
stones

To risk your sacred brow beneath—and
trust me,

This is of better metal, though less rich.
Sar. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a
rebel? Fellow! 135

Your part is to obey: return, and—no—
It is too late—I will go forth without it.

Sfe. At least, wear this.

Sar. Wear *Caucasus*! why, 'tis
A mountain on my temples.

Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to
battle. 140

All men will recognise you—for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in
her brightness.

Sar. I go forth to be recognised, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now—my spear! I'm
arm'd. 144

[*In going stops short, and turns to SFERO.*
Sfero—I had forgotten—bring the mirror.

Sfe. The mirror, sir?

Sar. Yes, sir, of polish'd brass,
Brought from the spoils of *India*—but be
speedy. [*Exit SFERO.*

Sar. *Myrrha*, retire unto a place of
safety.

Why went you not forth with the other
damsels? 149

Myr. Because my place is here.

Sar. And when I am gone—
Myr. I follow.

Sar. You! to battle?

Myr. If it were so,
'Twere not the first Greek girl had trod the
path.

I will await here your return.

Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it be so, 155

And I return not.

Myr. Still we meet again.

Sar. How?

Myr. In the spot where all must meet at
last—

In *Hades*! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the *Styx*; and if there be
not, 159

In ashes.

Sar. Darest thou so much?

Myr. I dare all things

Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty: forth, and do your
bravest.

Re-enter SFERO with the mirror.

Sar. [looking at himself]. This cuirass
fits me well, the baldric better,

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT III

And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem
[Flings away the helmet after trying it again.

Passing well in these toys; and now to prove them. 165

Altada! Where's Altada?

Sfe. Waiting, sire,
Without: he has your shield in readiness.

Sar. True; I forgot he is my shield-bearer

By right of blood, derived from age to age.
Myrrha, embrace me; yet once more—

once more— 170

Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory

Shall be to make me worthier of your love.
Myr. Go forth, and conquer!

[Exeunt SARDANAPALUS and SFERO.
Now, I am alone,

All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return! Let him but vanquish, and

Me perish! If he vanquish not, I perish;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound

About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is king; for now his king-

dom 179

Rocks underneath his throne, and the
earth yawns

To yield him no more of it than a grave;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty

Jove!

Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympus! yes, I love

him

Now, now, far more than—Hark—to
the war shout! 185

Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,
[She draws forth a small vial.

This cunning Colchian poison, which my
father

Learn'd to compound on Euxine shores,
and taught me

How to preserve, shall free me! It had
freed me 189

Long ere this hour, but that I loved, until
I half forgot I was a slave:—where all

Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,

So they are served in turn by something
lower

In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no

less 195

Are chains. Again that shout! and now
the clash

Of arms—and now—and now—

Enter ALTADA.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho!
Myr. He is not here; what wouldst thou
with him? How

Goes on the conflict?
Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the king?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero,
And bring him a new spear and his own

helmet. 201

He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew

his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad

light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair 205

Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,

And the broad fillet which crowns both.
Myr. Ye gods,

Who fulminate o'er my father's land, pro-
tect him! 209

Were you sent by the king?
Alt. By Salamenes,

Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless

sovereign.
The king! the king fights as he revels! ho!

What, Sfero! I will seek the armoury—
He must be there. [Exit ALTADA.

Myr. 'Tis no dishonour—no—
'Tis no dishonour to have loved this man.

I almost wish now, what I never wish'd
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides

Were shamed in wearing Lydian Om-
phale's

She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff;
surely 220

He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to

manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle,

As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,

And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek
tomb 226

His monument. How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost,
Lost almost past recovery. Zames!

Where
Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed
To watch before the apartment of the

women. 230

[Exit Officer.

Myr. [sola]. He's gone; and told no
more than that all's lost!

What need have I to know more? In
those words,

Those little words, a kingdom and a king,
A line of thirteen ages, and the lives

Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
With life, are merged; and I, too, with the

great,
Like a small bubble breaking with the

wave
Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the

least, 238

My fate is in my keeping; no proud victor
Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. Away with me,
Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose
A moment—all that's left us now.

Myr. The king?
Pan. Sent me here to conduct you
hence beyond
The river, by a secret passage.

Myr. Then
He lives—

Pan. And charged me to secure your
life,
And beg you to live on for his sake, till
He can rejoin you.

Myr. Will he then give way?
Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does
whate'er

Despair can do; and step by step disputes
The very palace.

Myr. They are here, then:—ay,
Their shouts come ringing through the
ancient halls,

Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line!
Farewell to all of Nimrod! Even the name
Is now no more.

Pan. Away with me—away!
Myr. No: I'll die here!—Away, and
tell your king
I loved him to the last.

*Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES with
Soldiers. PANIA quits MYRRHA, and
ranges herself with them.*

Sar. Since it is thus,
We'll die where we were born—in our own
halls.

Serry your ranks—stand firm. I have de-
spatch'd

A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful; they'll be here anon.
All is not over.—Pania, look to Myrrha.

[*PANIA returns towards MYRRHA.*]
Sal. We have breathing time; yet once
more charge, my friends—
One for Assyria!

Sar. Rather say for Bactria!
My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold to-
gether

This realm as province.
Sal. Hark! they come—they come.

Enter BELESES and ARBACES with the Rebels.

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil.
Charge! charge!

Bel. On! on!—Heaven fights for us,
and with us—On!

[*They charge the King and SALEMENES
with their troops, who defend them-*

*selves till the arrival of ZAMES with the
Guard before mentioned. The Rebels
are then driven off, and pursued by
SALEMENES, &c. As the King is going
to join the pursuit, BELESES crosses him.*
Bel. Ho! tyrant—I will end this war.

Sar. Even so,
My warlike priest, and precious prophet,
and
Grateful and trusty subject: yield, I pray
thee.

I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.

Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sar. No, thine.—I've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy
fate

In the sign of the Scorpion, which pro-
claims

That thou wilt now be crush'd.
Bel. But not by thee.

[*They fight; BELESES is wounded and
disarmed.*]

Sar. [raising his sword to despatch him,
exclaims]—

Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and
credit?

[*A party of Rebels enter and rescue BE-
LESES. They assail the King, who, in
turn, is rescued by a Party of his
Soldiers, who drive the Rebels off.*]

The villain was a prophet after all.
Upon them—ho! there—victory is ours.

[*Exit in pursuit.*]
Myr. [to *Pan.*] Pursue! Why stand'st
thou here, and leav'st the ranks

Of fellow-soldiers conquering without
thee?

Pan. The king's command was not to
quit thee.

Myr. *Me!*
Think not of me—a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,
I need no guard: what, with a world at
stake,

Keep watch upon a woman? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed! Nay, then, I will go
forth,

A feeble female, 'midst their desperate
strife,
And bid thee guard me there—where thou
shouldst shield

Thy sovereign. [*Exit MYRRHA.*]
Pan. Yet stay, damsel!—She is gone.

If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her
Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too; and can I do less than he,
Who never flash'd a scimitar till now?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch.

[*Exit PANIA.*]

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT III]

Enter ALTADA and SFFRO by an opposite door.

Alt. Myrrha! 301
What, gone? yet she was here when the fight raged,
And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them?

Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled; 304
They probably are but retired to make Their way back to the harem.

Alt. If the king Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doom'd To worse than captive rebels.

Sfe. Let us trace them; She cannot be fled far; and, found, she makes 310

A richer prize to our soft sovereign Than his recover'd kingdom.

Alt. Baal himself Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than

His silken son to save it: he defies All augury of foes or friends; and like The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes 316

A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder

As sweeps the air and deluges the earth. The man's inscrutable.

Sfe. Not more than others. All are the sons of circumstance: away— Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be Tortured for his infatuation, and 322
Condemn'd without a crime. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SALEMENES and Soldiers, &c.

Sal. The triumph is Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,

And we have open'd regular access 325 To the troops station'd on the other side Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,

When they hear of our victory.—But where 328
Is the chief victor? where's the king?

Enter SARDANAPALUS, cum suis, &c. and MYRRHA.

Sar. Here, brother. *Sal.* Unhurt, I hope.

Sar. Not quite; but let it pass. We've clear'd the palace—

Sal. And I trust the city. Our numbers gather; and I've order'd on-ward 332

A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved, All fresh and fiery, to be pour'd upon them In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.

Sar. It is already, or at least they march'd 336

Faster than I could follow with my Bac- trians,

Who spared no speed. I am spent: give me a seat.

Sal. There stands the throne, sire.

Sar. 'Tis no place to rest on, For mind nor body: let me have a couch, [*They place a seat.*]

A peasant's stool, I care not what: so— now 341

I breathe more freely.

Sal. This great hour has proved The brightest and most glorious of your life.

Sar. And the most tiresome. Where's my cupbearer?

Bring me some water.

Sal. [smiling]. 'Tis the first time he Ever had such an order: even I, 346

Your most austere of counsellors, would now

Suggest a purpler beverage.

Sar. Blood—doubtless. But there's enough of that shed; as for wine,

I have learn'd to-night the price of the pure element: 350

Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice re- new'd,

With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,

My charge upon the rebels. Where's the soldier

Who gave me water in his helmet?

One of the Guards. Slain, sire! An arrow pierced his brain, while, scat- tering 355

The last drops from his helm, he stood in act

To place it on his brows.

Sar. Slain! unrewarded! And slain to serve my thirst: that's hard,

poor slave! Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with

Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay 360

The pleasure of that draught; for I was parch'd

As I am now. [*They bring water—he drinks.*]

I live again—from henceforth The goblet I reserve for hours of love,

But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, sire, Which girds your arm?

Sar. A scratch from brave Beleses. *Myr.* Oh! he is wounded!

Sar. Not too much of that; And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,

Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with— *Sar.* The fillet of my diadem: the first time 369

That ornament was ever aught to me Save an encumbrance.

SCENE I]

SARDANAPALUS

Myr. [to the Attendants]. Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire;
I will unbind your wound and tend it.

Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore
do I ask? 375

Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted
on

This minion?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frighten'd antelopes.

Sar. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging
(And femininely meaneth furiously, 380
Because all passions in excess are female)
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture,
and

Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the
soldiers, 314

In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed!

Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through
her long hair

As it stream'd o'er her; her blue veins that
rose

Along her most transparent brow; her
nostril

Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the
din,

As a lute pierceth through the cymbals'
clash,

Jarr'd but not drown'd by the loud bratt-
ling; her

Waved arms, more dazzling with their own
born whiteness 395

Than the steel her hand held, which she
caught up

From a dead soldier's grasp;—all these
things made

Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself, 399
Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. [aside]. This is too much.
Again the love-fit's on him, and all's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts.

[Aloud.] But pray thee, sire,
Think of your wound—you said even now
'twas painful.

Sar. That's true, too; but I must not
think of it.

Sal. I have look'd to all things needful,
and will now 405
Receive reports of progress made in such
Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.

Sar. Be it so.

Sal. [in retiring]. Myrrha!

Myr. Prince!

Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord—But
now 410

I have no time: thou lovest the king?
Myr. I love

Sardanapalus.

Sal. But wouldst have him king still?

Myr. I would not have him less than
what he should be.

Sal. Well then, to have him king, and
yours, and all

He should, or should not be; to have him
live, 415

Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce re-
bellion

Raging without: look well that he relapse
not.

Myr. There needed not the voice of
Salemenes 420

To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can—

Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:

Exert it wisely. [Exit SALEMENES.]

Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be
jealous. 425

Myr. [smiling]. You have cause, sire;
for on the earth there breathes not
A man more worthy of a woman's love,
A soldier's trust, a subject's reverence,
A king's esteem—the whole world's ad-
miration!

Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I
must not 430

Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in
aught

That throws me into shade; yet you speak
truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your
wound look'd to.

Pray lean on me.

Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.
[Exeunt omnes.]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—SARDANAPALUS discovered sleep-
ing upon a Couch, and occasionally dis-
turbed in his slumbers, with MYRRHA
watching.

Myr. [sola, gazing]. I have stolen upon
his rest, if rest it be,

Which thus convulses slumber: shall I
wake him?

No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of
Quiet!

Whose reign is o'er seal'd eyelids and soft
dreams,

Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be un-
fathom'd, 5

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT IV

Look like thy brother, Death,—so still, so
strless—

For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm 8
Of thy stern, silent, and unawakening twin.
Again he moves—again the play of pain
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm
Beneath the mountain shadow; or the
blast

Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping
cling

Faintly and motionless to their loved
boughs. 15

I must awake him—yet not yet; who
knows

From what I rouse him? It seems pain;
but if

I quicken him to heavier pain? The fever
Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of
His wound, though slight, may cause all
this, and shake 20

Me more to see than him to suffer. No:
Let Nature use her own maternal means,
And I await to second, not disturb her.

Sar. [awakening]. Not so—although ye
multiplied the stars,

And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you! I would not so
purchase 26

The empire of eternity. Hence—hence—
Old hunter of the earliest brutes! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes!
Once bloody mortals—and now bloodier
idols, 30

If your priests lie not! And thou, ghastly
beldame!

Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling
on

The carcasses of Inde—away! away!
Where am I? Where the spectres?

Where—No—that
Is no false phantom: I should know it
'midst 35

All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living.

Myrrha!
Myr. Alas! thou art pale, and on thy
brow the drops

Gather like night dew. My beloved,
hush—

Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another
world, 40

And thou art lord of this. Be of good
cheer;

All will go well.

Sar. Thy hand—so—'tis thy hand;
'Tis flesh; grasp—clasp—yet closer, till I
feel

Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be—thine.

Sar. I know it now. I know this life
again. 46

Ah, *Myrrha!* I have been where we shall
be.

Myr. My lord!

Sar. I've been i' the grave—where
worms are lords,

And kings are—But I did not deem it so;
I thought 'twas nothing.

Myr. So it is; except
Unto the timid, who anticipate 51

That which may never be.

Sar. Oh, *Myrrha!* if
Sleep shows such things, what may not
death disclose?

Myr. I know no evil death can show,
which life 54

Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed

A shore where mind survives, 'twill be as
mind,

All unincorporate: or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay,

Which stalks, methinks, between our
souls and heaven, 60

And fetters us to earth—at least the phan-
tom,

Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear
death.

Sar. I fear it not; but I have felt—have
seen—

A legion of the dead.

Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,

And wretched. But proceed: what hast
thou seen? 66

Speak it, 'twill lighten thy dimm'd mind.

Sar. Methought—
Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired—in
pain—exhausted; all

Which can impair both strength and
spirit: seek 69

Rather to sleep again.

Sar. Not now—I would not
Dream: though I know it now to be a dream

What I have dreamt:—and canst thou
bear to hear it?

Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of
life or death,

Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.

Sar. And this look'd real, 75
I tell you: after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight—for then they fled.

Myr. Say on.

Sar. I saw, that is, I dream'd myself
Here—here—even where we are, guests as
we were,

Myself a host that deem'd himself but
guest, 80

Willing to equal all in social freedom;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead

Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd
meeting,

Was ranged on my left hand a haughty,
dark, 84

And deadly face; I could not recognise it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where:
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted; his long locks curl'd
down

On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feather'd from the
eagle's wing, 90
That peep'd up bristling through his serpent
hair.

I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answer'd not; I fill'd it;
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fix'd glare of his eye: 95
I frown'd upon him as a king should
frown;

He frown'd not in his turn, but look'd
upon me

With the same aspect, which appall'd me
more,

Because it changed not; and I turn'd for
refuge

To milder guests, and sought them on the
right, 100

Where thou wert wont to be. But——
[He pauses.

Myr. What instead?

Sar. In thy own chair—thy own place
in the banquet—

I sought thy sweet face in the circle—but
Instead—a grey-hair'd, wither'd bloody-
eyed,

And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly
thing, 105

Female in garb, and crown'd upon the
brow,

Furrow'd with years, yet sneering with the
passion

Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate:—my veins curdled.

Myr. Is this all?

Sar. Upon

Her right hand—her lank, bird-like right
hand—stood 110

A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood; and on
Her left, another, fill'd with—what I saw
not,

But turn'd from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crowned wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere
vision?

Sar. No:

It was so palpable, I could have touch'd
them. 117

I turn'd from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew

Ere I saw theirs: but no—all turn'd upon
me, 120

And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but
stared,

Till I grew stone, as they seem'd half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,

And life in me: there was a horrid kind

Of sympathy between us, as if they 125
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.

We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth—And rather let me
see 129

Death all than such a being!

Myr. And the end?

Sar. At last I sate, marble, as they, when
rose

The hunter and the crone; and smiling on
me—

Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The hunter smiled upon me—I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not—and the
woman's 135

Thin lips relax'd to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crown'd figures on each
hand

Rose also, as if aping their chief shades—
Mere mimics even in death—but I sate
still:

A desperate courage crept through every
limb, 140

And at the last I fear'd them not, but
laugh'd

Full in their phantom faces. But then—
then

The hunter laid his hand on mine: I took it,
And grasp'd it—but it melted from my
own;

While he too vanish'd, and left nothing
but 145

The memory of a hero, for he look'd so.
Myr. And was: the ancestor of heroes,
too,

And thine no less.

Sar. Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female who remain'd, she flew upon
me,

And burnt my lips up with her noisome
kisses; 150

And, flinging down the goblets on each
hand,

Methought their poisons flow'd around
us, till

Each form'd a hideous river. Still she
clung;

The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her,
as if, 156

In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her
incest.

Then—then—a chaos of all loathsome
things

Throng'd thick and shapeless: I was dead,
yet feeling— 160

Buried, and raised again—consumed by
worms,

Purged by the flames, and wither'd in the
air!

I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT IV

Save that I long'd for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies,—and woke and found thee. 165

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things—the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame 169
Unused to toil, yet over-wrought by toil
Such as might try the sternest.

Sar. I am better.
Now that I see thee once more, what was seen 172
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?
Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;

For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them. 176
My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew, who still

Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quell'd. 185

Sar. How wears the night?
Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness; use them for your further rest.

Sar. No, not to-night, if 'tis not gone:
methought 188

I pass'd hours in that vision.
Myr. Scarcely one;
I watch'd by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.

Sar. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek. 188

Sar. 'Tis granted.
Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and 'tis 194
For your ear only.

Myr. Prince, I take my leave.
[Exit MYRRHA.

Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.
Sar. Freedom only!

That slave deserves to share a throne.
Sal. Your patience—
'Tis not yet vacant, and 'tis of its partner
I come to speak with you.

Sar. How! of the queen?
Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety 200

That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children

For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta

Governs; and there at all events secure
My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them

Their just pretensions to the crown in case— 205

Sar. I perish—as is probable: well thought—

Let them set forth with a sure escort.
Sal. That

Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates: but ere they

Depart, will you not see—
Sar. My sons? It may

Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep; 211

And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes and ill-worn smiles?

You know I cannot feign.
Sal. But you can feel!

At least, I trust so; in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part—for ever.

Sar. Unto what end? what purpose? I will grant 217

Aught—all that she can ask—but such a meeting.

Sal. You know, or ought to know,
enough of women,

Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches

on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy than the whole external world.

I think as you do of my sister's wish;
But 'twas her wish—she is my sister—

you 225

Her husband—will you grant it?
Sar. 'Twill be useless:

But let her come.
Sal. I go. [Exit SALEMENES.

Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again—and now to meet!

Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle

sorrows, 230
Who have ceased to mingle love?

Re-enter SALEMENES and ZARINA.

Sal. My sister! Courage:
Shame not our blood with trembling, but

remember
From whence we sprung. The queen is

present, sire.
Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.

Sal. Since you ask it.
[Exit SALEMENES.

Zar. Alone with him! How many a
year has pass'd, 235

Though we are still so young, since we
have met,

Which I have worn in widowhood of heart!

He loved me not: yet he seems little changed—

Changed to me only—would the change were mutual!

He speaks not—scarce regards me—not a word,

Nor look—yet he was soft of voice and aspect,

Indifferent, not austere. My lord!

Sar. Zarina!

Sar. No, not Zarina—do not say Zarina.

That tone—that word—annihilate long years,

And things which make them longer.

Sar. 'Tis too late

To think of these past dreams. Let's not reproach—

That is, reproach me not—for the last time—

Zar. And first, I ne'er reproach'd you.

Sar. 'Tis most true; And that reproof comes heavier on my heart

Than—But our hearts are not in our own power.

Zar. Nor hands; but I gave both.

Sar. Your brother said It was your will to see me ere you went From Nineveh with—[*He hesitates*].

Zar. Our children: it is true. I wish'd to thank you that you have not divided

My heart from all that's left it now to love—

Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,

And look upon me as you look'd upon me Once—But they have not changed.

Sar. Nor ever will. I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish Those infants, not alone from the blind love

Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman. They are now the only tie between us.

Sar. Deem not I have not done you justice: rather make them

Resemble your own line than their own sire.

I trust them with you—to you: fit them for

A throne, or, if that be denied—You have heard

Of this night's tumults?

Zar. I had half forgotten, And could have welcomed any grief save yours,

Which gave me to behold your face again.

Sar. The throne—I say it not in fear—

but 'tis

In peril: they perhaps may never mount it; But let them not for this lose sight of it. I will dare all things to bequeath it them; But if I fail, then they must win it back Bravely—and, won, wear it wisely, not as I

Have wasted down my royalty.

Zar. They ne'er Shall know from me of aught but what may honour

Their father's memory.

Sar. Rather let them hear The truth from you than from a trampling world.

If they be in adversity, they'll learn

Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,

And find that all their father's sins are theirs.

My boys!—I could have borne it were I childless.

Zar. Oh! do not say so—do not poison all

My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,

And honour him who saved the realm for them,

So little cared for as his own; and if—

Sar. 'Tis lost, all earth will cry out, thank your father!

And they will swell the echo with a curse.

Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour

The name of him, who, dying like a king, In his last hours did more for his own memory

Than many monarchs in a length of days, Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.

Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;

But at the least, whate'er the past, their end Shall be like their beginning—memorable.

Zar. Yet be not rash—be careful of your life,

Live but for those who love.

Sar. And who are they?

A slave, who loves from passion—I'll not say

Ambition—she has seen thrones shake, and loves;

A few friends who have revell'd till we are As one, for they are nothing if I fall;

A brother I have injured—children whom I have neglected, and a spouse—

Zar. Who loves.

Sar. And pardons?

Zar. I have never thought of this, And cannot pardon till I have condemn'd.

Sar. My wife!

Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word! I never thought to hear it more—from thee.

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT IV

Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects. Yes—

These slaves whom I have nurtured, pamper'd, fed,

And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till

They reign themselves—all monarchs in their mansions—

Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand

His death, who made their lives a jubilee; While the few upon whom I have no claim

Are faithful! This is true, yet monstrous. *Zar.*

Perhaps too natural; for benefits Turn poison in bad minds.

Sar. And good ones make Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,

Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar. Then reap The honey, nor inquire whence 'tis derived.

Be satisfied—you are not all abandon'd.

Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink you,

Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal; That is, where mortals are, not where they must be?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my—that is,

Your children's sake!

Sar. My gentle, wrong'd Zarina! I am the very slave of circumstance

And impulse—borne away with every breath!

Misplaced upon the throne—misplaced in life.

I know not what I could have been, but feel I am not what I should be—let it end.

But take this with thee: if I was not form'd To prize a love like thine, a mind like

thine, Nor dote even on thy beauty—as I've doted

On lesser charms, for no cause save that such

Devotion was a duty, and I hated All that look'd like a chain for me or

others (This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear

These words, perhaps among my last—that none

E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not

To profit by them—as the miner lights Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering

That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,

But 'tis not his—but some superior's, who Placed him to dig, but not divide the

wealth Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift

Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning

The sullen earth. *Zar.*

Oh! if thou hast at length Discover'd that my love is worth esteem,

I ask no more—but let us hence together, And I—let me say we—shall yet be happy.

Assyria is not all the earth—we'll find A world out of our own—and be more

bless'd Than I have ever been, or thou, with all An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye— The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.

Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out

Instantans so high and blest?

Sal. Blest! He hath been So gentle with me, that I cannot think

Of quitting. *Sal.*

So—this feminine farewell Ends as such partings end, in no departure.

I thought as much, and yielded against all My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be? *Sal.*

Remain, and perish— *Zar.*

With my husband— *Sal.*

And children. *Zar.*

Alas! *Sal.*

Hear me, sister, like My sister:—all's prepared to make your

safety Certain, and of the boys too, our last

hopes; 'Tis not a single question of mere feeling,

Though that were much—but 'tis a point of state:

The rebels would do more to seize upon The offspring of their sovereign, and so

crush— *Zar.*

Ah! do not name it. *Sal.*

Well, then, mark me: when They are safe beyond the Median's grasp,

the rebels Have miss'd their chief aim—the extinction of

The line of Nimrod. Though the present king

Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance. *Zar.*

But could not I remain, alone? *Sal.*

What! leave Your children, with two parents and yet orphans—

In a strange land—so young, so distant? *Zar.*

No— My heart will break. *Sal.*

Now you know all—decide. *Sar.*

Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we

Must yield awhile to this necessity. 385
 Remaining here, you may lose all; departing,

You save the better part of what is left,
 To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
 As yet beat in these kingdoms.

Sal. The time presses.

Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again,
 perhaps 390

I may be worthier of you—and, if not,
 Remember that my faults, though not
 atoned for,

Are ended. Yet, I dread thy nature will
 Grieve more about the blighted name and
 ashes

Which once were mightiest in Assyria—
 than— 395

But I grow womanish again, and must not;
 I must learn sternness now. My sins have
 all

Been of the softer order—hide thy
 tears—

I do not bid thee *not* to shed them—'twere
 Easier to stop Euphrates at its source
 Than one tear of a true and tender heart—

But let me not behold them; they unman
 me 402

Here when I had remann'd myself. My
 brother,

Lead her away.

Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
 Behold him more!

Sal. [*striving to conduct her*]. Nay,
 sister, I must be obey'd. 405

Zar. I must remain—away! you shall
 not hold me.

What, shall he die alone?—I live alone?

Sal. He shall *not* die alone; but lonely
 you

Have lived for years.

Zar. That's false! I knew *he* lived,
 And lived upon his image—let me go!

Sal. [*conducting her off the stage*]. Nay,
 then, I must use some fraternal
 force, 411

Which you will pardon.

Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
 Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
 Torn from thee?

Sal. Nay—then all is lost again,
 If that this moment is not gain'd.

Zar. My brain turns— 415
 My eyes fail—where is he? [*She faints.*

Sar. [*advancing*]. No—set her down;
 She's dead—and you have slain her.

Sal. 'Tis the mere
 Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
 She will recover. Pray, keep back.—

[*Aside*] I must
 Avail myself of this sole moment to 420

Bear her to where her children are em-
 bark'd,

I' the royal galley on the river.

[*SALEMENES bears her off.*

Sar. [*solus*].

This, too—

And this too must I suffer—I, who never
 Inflicted purposely on human hearts

A voluntary pang! But that is false—
 She loved me, and I loved her.—Fatal

passion! 426
 Why dost thou not expire *at once* in hearts
 Which thou hast lighted up at once?

Zarina!

I must pay dearly for the desolation
 Now brought upon thee. Had I never
 loved 430

But thee, I should have been an unopposed
 Monarch of honouring nations. To what

gulfs

A single deviation from the track
 Of human duties leads even those who

claim 434
 The homage of mankind as their born due,
 And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!

Enter MYRRHA.

Sar. You here! Who call'd you?

Myr. No one—but I heard
 Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,

And thought—

Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
 To enter here till sought for.

Myr. Though I might, 440
 Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours
 (Although they *too* were *chiding*), which

reproved
 Because I ever dreaded to intrude;

Resisting my own wish and your in-
 junction

To heed no time nor presence, but ap-
 proach you 445

Uncall'd for:—I retire.

Sar. Yet stay—being here.
 I pray you pardon me: events have sour'd
 me

Till I wax peevish—heed it not: I shall
 Soon be myself again.

Myr. I wait with patience,
 What I shall see with pleasure.

Sar. Scarce a moment 450
 Before your entrance in this hall, *Zarina*,
 Queen of Assyria, departed hence.

Myr. Ah!

Sar. Wherefore do you start?

Myr. Did I do so?

Sar. 'Twas well you enter'd by another
 portal,

Else you had met. That pang at least is
 spared her! 455

Myr. I know to feel for her.

Sar. That is too much,
 And beyond nature—'tis nor mutual
 Nor possible. You cannot pity her,

Nor she ought but—

Myr. Despise the favourite slave?
 Not more than I have ever scorn'd myself.

Sar. Scorn'd! what, to be the envy of
 your sex, 461

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT IV

And lord it o'er the heart of the world's, And none could make me doubt it save
lord? yourself.

Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten
thousand worlds— Those words—

As you are like to lose the one you
sway'd— *Myr.* Were words. I pray you, let
the proofs

I did abase myself as much in being 465
Your paramour, as though you were a
peasant— Be in the past acts you were pleased to
praise

Nay, more, if that the peasant were a
Greek. This very night, and in my further bear-
ing, 500

Sar. You talk it well— Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.
Myr. And truly. *Sar.* I am content: and, trusting in my
cause,

Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not 470
Quite fall'n, nor now disposed to bear
reproaches, Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace—the only victory I covet.

Perhaps because I merit them too often, To me war is no glory—conquest no
Let us then part while peace is still between
us. Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my
right 506

Myr. Part! Sits heavier on my heart than all the
wrongs

Sar. Have not all past human
beings parted, These men would bow me down with.
And must not all the present one day
part? 475 Never, never

Myr. Why? Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others. 510
I thought to have made mine inoffensive
rule

Sar. For your safety, which I
will have look'd to, An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody
annals,

With a strong escort to your native land;
And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a
kingdom. A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and
smile, 514

Myr. I pray you talk not thus. And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a para-
dise,

Sar. The queen is gone: 480
You need not shame to follow. I would
fall

Alone—I seek no partners but in pleasure.
Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting
not. 520

Sar. Think well of it—
It soon may be too late. My only guerdon—so they are, my
Myrrha: [He kisses her.

Myr. So let it be; 485
For then you cannot separate me from you. Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and
life!

Sar. And will not; but I thought you
wish'd it. They shall have both, but never thee!

Myr. II. No, never!
Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering—kingdoms fall,
hosts yield, 525

Sar. You spoke of your abasement. Friends fail, slaves fly, and all betray—
and, more

Myr. And I feel it
Deeply—more deeply than all things but
love. 489

Sar. Then fly from it. Than all, the most indebted—but a heart
That loves without self-love! 'Tis here—
now prove it.

Myr. 'Twill not recall the past—
'Twill not restore my honour, nor my
heart.

No—here I stand or fall. If that you
conquer,

I live to joy in your great triumph: should
Your lot be different, I'll not weep, but
share it. 530

You did not doubt me a few hours ago. Of higher matter than a woman's presence.
Sar. Your courage never—nor your
love till now; 496

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you—How! she here
again?

Sar. Return not
Now to reproof: methinks your aspect
speaks 530

Of higher matter than a woman's presence.
Sal. The only woman whom it much
imports me

SCENE I]

At such a moment now is safe in absence—
The queen's embark'd.

Sar. And well? say that much.

Sal. Yes.
Her transient weakness has pass'd o'er; at
least, 535

It settled into tearless silence: her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fix'd
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath
the starlight; 540

But she said nothing.

Sar. Would I felt no more
Than she has said!

Sal. 'Tis now too late to feel.
Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang:
To change them, my advices bring sure
tidings

That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees,
marshall'd 545

By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack: they have apparently
Been join'd by other satraps.

Sar. What! more rebels?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent 550
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are join'd by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall
be

In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too; but, till then, my
voice 555

Is to await the onset.

Sar. I detest
That waiting; though it seems so safe to
fight

Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on
spikes

Strew'd to receive them, still I like it not—
My soul seems lukewarm; but when I set
on them, 561

Though they were piled on mountains, I
would have

A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood!—
Let me then charge.

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sar. I am no soldier, but a man: speak
not 565
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and
those

Who pride themselves upon it; but direct
me

Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily: 'tis not
Like mine or any other subject's breath;
The whole war turns upon it—with it; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench
it— 572

Prolong it—end it.

SARDANAPALUS

Sar. Then let us end both!
'Twere better thus, perhaps, than pro-
long either;

I'm sick of one, perchance of both.
[A trumpet sounds without.

Sal. Hark!

Sar. Let us 575
Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound!

Sar. 'Tis bound—
'Tis heal'd—I had forgotten it. Away!
A leech's lancet would have scratch'd me
deeper;

The slave that gave it might be well
ashamed

To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour 580
Strike with a better aim!

Sar. Ay, if we conquer;
But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king.

Upon them! [Trumpet sounds again.

Sal. I am with you.

Sar. Ho, my arms! again, my arms!
[Exeunt.

ACT V

SCENE I.—The same Hall in the Palace.

MYRRHA and BALEA.

Myr. [at a window]. The day at last
has broken. What a night
Hath usher'd it! how beautiful in heaven!
Though varied with a transitory storm,
More beautiful in that variety!

How hideous upon earth! where peace and
hope, 5
And love and revel, in an hour were
trampled

By human passions to a human chaos,
Not yet resolved to separate elements—
'Tis warring still! And can the sun so rise,

So bright, so rolling back the clouds into
Vapours more lovely than the unclouded
sky, 11

With golden pinnacles, and snowy moun-
tains,

And billows purpler than the ocean's,
making

In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
So like we almost deem it permanent; 15
So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught

Beyond a vision, 'tis so transiently
Scatter'd along the eternal vault: and yet
It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the
soul,

And blends itself into the soul, until 20
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted
epoch

Of sorrow and of love; which they who
mark not,

Know not the realms where those twin
genii

(Who chasten and who purify our hearts,

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT V

So that we would not change their sweet
rebukes 25

For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
The air with clamour) build the palaces
Where their fond votaries repose and
breathe

Briefly;—but in that brief cool calm inhale
Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
And dream them through in placid
sufferance,

Though seemingly employ'd like all the
rest

Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks
Of pain or pleasure, two names for one
feeling, 35

Which our internal, restless agony
Would vary in the sound, although the

Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Bal. You muse right calmly; and can
you so watch

The sunrise which may be our last?

Myr. It is 40
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it
more,

For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
Without the reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being
as fragile 45

As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which when I gaze
upon

I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so
once on earth

He sway'd.

Myr. He sways it now far more,
then; never 50

Had earthly monarch half the power and
glory

Which centres in a single ray of his.

Bal. Surely he is a god!

Myr. So we Greeks deem too;
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous
orb 54

Must rather be the abode of gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he
breaks

Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes
with light

That shuts the world out. I can look no
more.

Bal. Hark! heard you not a sound?

Myr. No, 'twas mere fancy; 59
They battle it beyond the wall, and not

As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers: the palace has become a
fortress

Since that insidious hour; and here,
within

The very centre, girded by vast courts 64
And regal halls of pyramid proportions,

Which must be carried one by one before
They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the
sound

Of peril as from glory.

Bal. But they reach'd

Thus far before.

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were 70
Beat back by valour; now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.

Bal. May they
Prosper!

Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas!
How vainly!

Bal. It is said the king's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appall'd
The rebels than astonish'd his true subjects.

Myr. 'Tis easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of
slaves; 80

But he did bravely.

Bal. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him
down.

Myr. The wretch was overthrown,
but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who
vanquish'd him 84

In fight, as he had spared him in his peril;
And by that heedless pity risk'd a crown.

Bal. Hark!

Myr. You are right; some steps
approach, but slowly.

*Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES
wounded, with a broken javelin in his
side: they seat him upon one of the
couches which furnish the Apartment.*

Myr. Oh, Jove!

Bal. Then all is over.
Sal. That is false.

Hew down the slave who says so, if a
soldier.

Myr. Spare him—he's none: a mere
court butterfly, 90

That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.

Sal. Let him live on, then.

Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.

Sal. I fain would live this hour out,
and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me
here?

Sol. By the king's order. When the
javelin struck you, 95

You fell and fainted: 'twas his strict com-
mand

To bear you to this hall.

Sal. 'Twas not ill done:
For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,

The sight might shake our soldiers—but—
'tis vain,

I feel it ebbing!

Myr. Let me see the wound; 100
I am not quite skillless: in my native land
'Tis part of our instruction. War being
constant,

We are nerved to look on such things.
Sol. Best extract

The javelin.

Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.

Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must
follow 105

The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.

Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the
king when you

Convey'd me from the spot where I was
stricken?

Sol. Upon the same ground, and en-
couraging

With voice and gesture the dispirited
troops 110

Who had seen you fall, and falter'd back.

Sal. Whom heard ye

Named next to the command?

Sol. I did not hear.

Sal. Fly then, and tell him, 'twas my
last request

That Zames take my post until the
junction, 114

So hoped for, yet delay'd, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops

Are not so numerous as to spare your
absence.

Sol. But, prince—

Sal. Hence, I say! Here's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.

As you would not permit me to expire
Upon the field, I'll have no idle soldiers

About my sick couch. Hence! and do my
bidding! [*Exeunt the Soldiers.*]

Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit!
must the earth

So soon resign thee?

Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 'tis 124

The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this;

As 'tis, I have not outlived them.

Myr. You wax paler.

Sal. Your hand; this broken weapon
but prolongs 128

My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful: I would draw it forth

And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Soldiers.

Sal. My best brother!
Sal. And the battle 132

Is lost?

Sal. [*despondingly*]. You see me here.

Sal. I'd rather see you *thus*!

[*He draws out the weapon from the
wound, and dies.*]

Sal. And *thus* I will be seen; unless
the succour,

The last frail reed of our beleaguer'd
hopes, 135

Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not

Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?

Sal. I did.

Myr. Where's Zames?

Sal. Dead.

Myr. And Altada?

Sal. Dying.

Myr. Pania? Sfero?

Sal. Pania yet lives: but Sfero's fled
or captive. 140

I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost?

Sal. Our walls,
Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out

against
Their present force, or aught save

treachery:

But i' the field—

Myr. I thought 'twas the intent

Of Salemenes not to risk a sally 145

Till ye were strengthen'd by the expected
succours.

Sal. I overruled him.

Myr. Well, the fault's a brave one.

Sal. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I
would give

These realms, of which thou wert the orna-
ment,

The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming
honour, 150

To call back—But I will not weep for thee;
Thou shalt be mourn'd for as thou wouldst

be mourn'd.
It grieves me most that thou couldst quit

this life

Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for—our long royalty of race.

If I redeem it, I will give thee blood 156
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atone-
ment

(The tears of all the good are thine
already).

If not, we meet again soon,—if the spirit
Within us lives beyond;—thou readest

mine, 160

And dost me justice now. Let me once
clasp

That yet warm hand, and fold that throb-
less heart [*Embraces the body.*]

To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.

Soldier. Where?

Sal. To my proper chamber.

Place it beneath my canopy, as though
The king lay there: when this is done, we

will 166

Speak further of the rites due to such
ashes.

[*Exeunt Soldiers with the body of
SALEMENES.*]

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT V

Enter PANIA.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and issued The orders fix'd on?

Pan. Sire, I have obey'd.

Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pan. Sire? 170

Sar. I'm answer'd! When a king asks twice, and has

A question as an answer to *his* question, It is a portent. What! they are dishearten'd?

Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts

Of the exulting rebels on his fall, 175 Have made them—

Sar. Rage—not droop—it should have been.

We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pan. Such a loss Might sadden even a victory.

Sar. Alas!

Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet, Though coop'd within these walls, they are strong, and we 180

Have those without will break their way through hosts,

To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was—

A palace; not a prison, nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!

Offi. I dare not.

Sar. Dare not?

While millions dare revolt with sword in hand! 185

That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence

Which loathes to shock its sovereign; we can hear

Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pan. Proceed, thou hearest.

Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink 189

Is thrown down by the sudden inundation Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln

From the enormous mountains where it rises,

By the late rains of that tempestuous region, O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroy'd the bulwark.

Pan. That's a black augury! it has been said 195

For ages, 'That the city ne'er should yield To man, until the river grew its foe.'

Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.

How much is swept down of the wall?

Offi. About

Some twenty stadia.

Sar. And all this is left 200

Pervious to the assailants?

Offi.

For the present

The river's fury must impede the assault; But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,

And may be cross'd by the accustomed barks,

The palace is their own.

Sar. That shall be never 205

Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,

Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,

My fathers' house shall never be a cave For wolves to horde and howl in.

Pan. With your sanction, I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures 210

For the assurance of the vacant space As time and means permit.

Sar. About it straight, And bring me back, as speedily as full

And fair investigation may permit, 214 Report of the true state of this irruption

Of waters. [*Exeunt PANIA and the Officer.*]

Myr. Thus the very waves rise up Against you.

Sar. They are not my subjects, girl, And may be pardon'd, since they can't be

punish'd

Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

Sar. I am past the fear of portents: they can tell me 220

Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:

Despair anticipates such things.

Myr. Despair!

Sar. No; not despair precisely. When we know

All that can come, and how to meet it, our Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble

Word than this is to give it utterance. 226 But what are words to us? we have well

nigh done

With them and all things.

Myr. Save one deed—the last And greatest to all mortals; crowning act

Of all that was, or is, or is to be— 230 The only thing common to all mankind,

So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,

Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,

Without one point of union save in this, To which we tend, for which we're born,

and thread 235 The labyrinth of mystery, call'd life.

Sar. Our clue being well nigh wound out, let's be cheerful.

They who have nothing more to fear may well

Indulge a smile at that which once appall'd; 239

As children at discover'd bugbears.

Re-enter PANIA.

Pan. 'Tis
As was reported: I have order'd there
A double guard, withdrawing from the
wall
Where it was strongest the required
addition
To watch the breach occasion'd by the
waters.

Sar. You have done your duty faith-
fully, and as ²⁴⁵
My worthy Pania! further ties between us
Draw near a close—I pray you take this
key: [*Gives a key.*]
It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber.

(Now
Press'd by a nobler weight than e'er it
bore— ²⁵⁰
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain
down

Along its golden frame—as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes). Search
The secret covert to which this will lead
you; ²⁵⁴

'Tis full of treasure; take it for yourself
And your companions: there's enough to
load ye,

Though ye be many. Let the slaves be
freed, too;
And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.

Thence launch the regal barks, once form'd
for pleasure, ²⁶⁰

And now to serve for safety, and embark.
The river's broad and swoln, and uncom-
manded

(More potent than a king) by these
besiegers.

Fly! and be happy!

Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get
thee hence, ²⁶⁶

And leave me to my fate.

Pan. 'Tis the first time
I ever disobey'd: but now—

Sar. So all men
Dare beard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no
further; ²⁷⁰

'Tis my command, my last command.
Wilt thou

Oppose it? thou!

Pan. But yet—not yet.

Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.

Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.

Sar. 'Tis enough. Now order here
Faggots, pine-nuts, and wither'd leaves,
and such ²⁷⁶

Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole
spark;

Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and
spices,

And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for
it is ²⁸⁰

For a great sacrifice I build the pyre!
And heap them round yon throne.

Pan. My lord!
Sar. I have said it,
And you have sworn.

Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [*Exit PANIA.*]

Myr. What mean you?
Sar. You shall know

Anon—what the whole earth shall ne'er
forget. ²⁸⁵

PANIA, returning with a Herald.

Pan. My king, in going forth upon my
duty,

This herald has been brought before me,
craving

An audience.

Sar. Let him speak.
Her. The King Arbaces—

Sar. What, crown'd already?—But,
proceed.

Her. Beleses, ²⁸⁹

The anointed high-priest—

Sar. Of what god or demon?
With new kings rise new altars. But,

proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will,
and not

Reply to mine.

Her. And Satrap Ofratanes—
Sar. Why, he is ours.

Her. [*showing a ring.*] Be sure that he
is now ²⁹⁴

In the camp of the conquerors; behold
His signet ring.

Sar. 'Tis his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time

To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted

subject.

Proceed.
Her. They offer thee thy life, and free-
dom ³⁰⁰

Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,

Guarded and watch'd, but not confined
in person,

Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace;
but on

Condition that the three young princes
are ³⁰⁵

Given up as hostages.
Sar. [*ironically.*] The generous victors!

Her. I wait the answer.
Sar. Answer, slave! How long

Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT V

Her. Since they were free. 308

Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny!

Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty

Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania!

Let his head be thrown from our walls

within

The rebels' lines, his carcass down the

river.

Away with him!

[PANIA and the Guards seizing him.

Pan. I never yet obey'd

Your orders with more pleasure than the

present. 315

Hence with him, soldiers! do not soil this

hall

Of royalty with treasonable gore;

Put him to rest without.

Her. A single word:

My office, king, is sacred.

Sar. And what's mine?

That thou shouldst come and dare to ask

of me 320

To lay it down?

Her. I but obey'd my orders,

At the same peril if refused, as now

Incurr'd by my obedience.

Sar. So there are

New monarchs of an hour's growth as

despotic

As sovereigns swathed in purple, and

enthroned 325

From birth to manhood!

Her. My life waits your breath.

Yours (I speak humbly)—but it may be—

yours

May also be in danger scarce less

imminent:

Would it then suit the last hours of a line

Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy

A peaceful herald, unarm'd, in his office;

And violate not only all that man

Holds sacred between man and man—

but that

More holy tie which links us with the gods?

Sar. He's right.—Let him go free.—

My life's last act 335

Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow,

take

[Gives him a golden cup from a table near.

This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,

And think of me; or melt it into ingots,

And think of nothing but their weight and

value.

Her. I thank you doubly for my life,

and this 340

Most gorgeous gift, which renders it more

precious.

But must I bear no answer?

Sar. Yes,—I ask

An hour's truce to consider.

Her. But an hour's?

Sar. An hour's: if at the expiration of

That time your masters hear no further

from me, 345

They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act besittingly.

Her. I shall not fail

To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.

Sar. And hark! a word more.

Her. I shall not forget it,

Whate'er it be.

Sar. Commend me to Beleses; 350

And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon

Him hence to meet me.

Her. Where?

Sar. At Babylon.

At least from thence he will depart to meet

me.

Her. I shall obey you to the letter.

[Exit Herald.

Sar. Pania!—

Now, my good Pania!—quick—with

what I order'd. 355

Pan. My lord,—the soldiers are

already charged.

And see! they enter.

[Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about

the Throne, &c.

Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,

And thicker yet; and see that the founda-

tion

Be such as will not speedily exhaust

Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be

quenched 360

With aught officious aid would bring to

quell it.

Let the throne form the core of it; I would

not

Leave that, save fraught with fire un-

quenchable,

To the new comers. Frame the whole as if

'Twere to enkindle the strong tower of our

Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an

aspect! 366

How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice

For a king's obsequies?

Pan. Ay, for a kingdom's.

I understand you, now.

Sar. And blame me?

Pan. No—

Let me but fire the pile, and share it with

you. 370

Myr. That duty's mine.

Pan. A woman's!

Myr. 'Tis the soldier's

Part to die for his sovereign, and why not

The woman's with her lover?

Pan. 'Tis most strange!

Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou

think'st it.

In the mean time, live thou.—Farewell!

the pile 375

Is ready.

Pan. I should shame to leave my sove-

reign

With but a single female to partake

His death.

Sar. Too many far have heralded

Me to the dust already. Get thee hence:
Enrich thee.

Pan. And live wretched!

Sar. Think upon 380
Thy vow:—'tis sacred and irrevocable.

Pan. Since it is so, farewell.

Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold;
Remember, what you leave you leave the
slaves

Who slew me: and when you have borne
away 385
All safe off to your boats, blow one long
blast

Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then
fly,— 390

And as you sail, turn back; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates: if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say, what you saw at parting, and request
That she remember what I said at one
Parting more mournful still.

Pan. That royal hand!
Let me then once more press it to my lips;
And these poor soldiers who throng round
you, and

Would fain die with you!

[*The Soldiers and PANIA throng round
him, kissing his hand and the hem of
his robe.*]

Sar. My best! my last friends! 400
Let's not unman each other: part at once:
All farewells should be sudden, when for
ever,

Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy: trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied; or far more for what
Is past than present; for the future, 'tis
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be: I shall know soon. Farewell—
Farewell.

[*Exeunt PANIA and Soldiers.*
Myr. These men were honest: it is com-
fort still 410

That our last looks should be on loving
faces.

Sar. And lovely ones, my beautiful! but
hear me!

If at this moment—for we now are on
The brink—thou feel'st an inward shrink-
ing from

This leap through flame into the future,
say it: 415

I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature; and there's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.

Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heap'd be-
neath 419

The ever-burning lamp that burns without,
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?

Sar. Do so. Is that thy answer?
Myr. Thou shalt see.

[*Exit MYRRHA.*
Sar. [*solus.*] She's firm. My fathers!
whom I will rejoin, 423

It may be, purified by death from some
Of the gross stains of too material being,
I would not leave your ancient first abode
To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
If I have not kept your inheritance
As ye bequeath'd it, this bright part of it,
Your treasure, your abode, your sacred
relics 430

Of arms and records, monuments, and
spoils,

In which they would have revell'd, I bear
with me

To you in that absorbing element, 433
Which most personifies the soul as leaving
The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings:—and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar form'd of cloud and flame,
A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mount of ashes, but a light
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and 441
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench
full many

A people's records, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise—but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

*MYRRHA returns with a lighted Torch in
one Hand, and a Cup in the other.*

Myr. Lo!
I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.

Sar. And the cup?

Myr. 'Tis my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.

Sar. And mine
To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of
many 455

A joyous banquet past.
[*SARDANAPALUS takes the cup, and after
drinking and tinkling the reversed cup,
as a drop falls, exclaims—*

And this libation
Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's
name

Than on his mate's in villainy?

Sar. The one
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the
other 461

SARDANAPALUS

[ACT V

Is master-mover of his warlike puppet;
But I dismiss them from my mind.—Yet

pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think 465
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom?

Sar. Then
We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long
In sounding.

Sar. Now, farewell; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there
is one more. 470

Sar. True, the commingling fire will
mix our ashes.

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee,
shall they,

Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly
passion,

Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet
irks me.

Sar. Say it.

Myr. It is that no kind hand will
gather 475

The dust of both into one urn.
Sar. The better:

Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scatter'd into air,

Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing

palace, 480
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt

Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er
dead kings,

Or *kine*, for none know whether those
proud piles 484

Be for their monarch or their ox-god Apis:
So much for monuments that have for-

gotten
Their very record!

Myr. Then farewell, thou earth!
And loveliest spot of earth! farewell,

Ionian!

Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation! My last prayer

Was for thee, my last thoughts, save one,
were of thee! 491

Sar. And that?

Myr. Is yours.
[The trumpet of PANIA sounds without.

Sar. Hark!
Myr. Now!

Sar. Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my father's land,

And better as my country than my king-
dom.

I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,

Not even a grave. [He mounts the pile.
Now, Myrrha!

Myr. Art thou ready?
Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.

[MYRRHA fires the pile.
Myr. 'Tis fired! I come.

[As MYRRHA springs forward to throw
herself into the flames, the Curtain
falls.

THE TWO FOSCARI

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

'The father softens, but the governor's resolved.'—CRITIC.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN
FRANCIS FOSCARI, *Doge of Venice*.
JACOPO FOSCARI, *Son of the Doge*.
JAMES LOREDANO, *a Patrician*.
MARCO MEMMO, *a Chief of the Forty*.
BARBARIGO, *a Senator*.

Other Senators, The Council of Ten, Guards,
Attendants, &c., &c.

WOMAN
MARINA, *Wife of young FOSCARI*.

SCENE.—The Ducal Palace, Venice

ACT I

SCENE I.—A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO, meeting.

Lor. Where is the prisoner?

Bar. Reposing from
The Question.

Lor. The hour 's past—fix'd yesterday
For the resumption of his trial.—Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and

Urge his recall.

Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;

He was o'erwrought by the Question
yesterday,

And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well?

Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari, 10

Father and son, and all their noxious
race;

But the poor wretch has suffer'd beyond
nature's
Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime?

Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avow'd the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

Bar. To extermination.

Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this.—Let's in to
council.

Bar. Yet pause—the number of our
colleagues is not

Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.

Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?

Bar. No—he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

Lor. True—true—
His last.

Bar. Will nothing move you?

Lor. Feels he, think you?

Bar. He shows it not.

Lor. I have mark'd that—the wretch!

Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he pass'd the
threshold

The old man fainted.

Lor. It begins to work, then.

Bar. The work is half your own.

Lor. And should be all mine—
My father and my uncle are no more.

Bar. I have read their epitaph, which
says they died

By poison.

Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sicken'd shortly:—he is sove-
reign.

Bar. A wretched one.

Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?

Bar. But did the Doge make you so?

Lor. Yes.

Bar. What solid proofs?

Lor. When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.

Bar. But you will move by law?

Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true

That you have written in your books of
commerce
(The wealthy practice of our highest
nobles),

'Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?'

Lor. It is written thus.

Bar. And will you leave it uneras'd?

Lor. Till balanced.

Bar. And how?

[Two Senators pass over the stage, as in
their way to 'the Hall of the Council
of Ten.'

Lor. You see the number is complete.

Follow me. [Exit LOREDANO.

Bar. [solus]. Follow thee! I have fol-
low'd long

Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike welching
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds,
and wretch

Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
The waters through them; but this son and
sire

Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardly like them—Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly!—

Lo, where he comes!—Be still, my heart!
they are

Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou
beat

For those who almost broke thee?

*Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI as
prisoner, &c.*

Guard. Let him rest.

Signor, take time.

Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I'm
feeble;

But thou may'st stand reproved.

Guard. I'll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fos. That's kind:—I meet some
pity, but no mercy;

This is the first.

Guard. And might be the last, did they
Who rule behold us.

Bar. [advancing to the Guard]. There is
one who does:

Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,

Wait their last summons—I am of 'the
Ten',

And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call
sounds,

We'll in together.—Look well to the
prisoner!

Jac. Fos. What voice is that?—'Tis
Barbarigo's! Ah!

Our house's foe, and one of my few judges.

Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there
be,

Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT I

Jac. Fos.
He judges.

Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire,
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety—

Jac. Fos. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the
waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Bar. [to the Guard]. Let him approach.
I must not speak with him
Further than thus: I have transgress'd my
duty 90

In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber.

[*Exit BARBARIGO.*
*Guard conducting JACOPO FOSCARI to
the window.*

Guard. There, sir, 'tis
Open.—How feel you?

Jac. Fos. Like a boy—Oh Venice!
Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they
borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have
skimm'd 95

The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier,
amidst

My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure, in the pride of
strength;

While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on 101
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding
hands,

Even to the goal!—How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more
daring, 105

The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's
stroke

Flinging the billows back from my drench'd
hair,

And laughing from my lip the audacious
brine,

Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still

The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down

Into their green and glassy gulfs, and
making

My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they wax'd fearful;
then 115

Returning with my grasp full of such
tokens

As show'd that I had search'd the deep:
exulting,

With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing
deep

True, The long-suspended breath, again I
spurn'd

The foam which broke around me, and
pursued 120
My track like a sea-bird.—I was a boy
then.

Guard. Be a man now: there never was
more need
Of manhood's strength.

Jac. Fos. [looking from the lattice]. My
beautiful, my own,
My only Venice—this is breath! Thy
breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my
face! 125

Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How
unlike

The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howled about my Candiot
dungeon, and

Made my heart sick!
Guard. I see the colour comes

Back to your cheek: Heaven send you
strength to bear 131

What more may be imposed!—I dread
to think on't.

Jac. Fos. They will not banish me
again?—No—no,

Let them wring on; I am strong yet.
Guard. Confess,

And the rack will be spared you.
Jac. Fos. I confess'd 135

Once—twice before: both times they
exiled me,

Guard. And the third time will slay
you.

Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives else-
where.

Guard. And can you so much love the
soil which hates you? 140

Jac. Fos. The soil!—Oh no, it is the
seed of the soil

Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.

I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be
here. 145

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Bring in the prisoner!
Guard. Signor, you hear the order.

Jac. Fos. Ay, I am used to such a sum-
mons: 't is

The third time they have tortured me:—
then lend me

Thine arm. [To the Guard.
Offi. Take mine, sir; 'tis my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

Jac. Fos. You!—you are he 150
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs—
Away!—I'll walk alone.

Offi. As you please, signor;
The sentence was not of my signing,
but

I dared not disobey the Council when
They—

Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on
their horrid engine. 155

I pray thee touch me not—that is, just
now;

The time will come they will renew that
order,

But keep off from me till 'tis issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrench-
ing, 160

And the cold drops strain through my
brow, as if—

But onward—I have borne it—I can bear
it.—

How looks my father?

Offi. With his wonted aspect.

Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky,
the blue of ocean,

The brightness of our city, and her
domes, 165

The mirth of her Piazza, even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,

Even here, into these chambers of the
unknown

Who govern, and the unknown and the
unnumber'd

Judged and destroy'd in silence,—all
things wear 170

The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
Nothing can sympathise with Foscari,

Not even a Foscari.—Sir, I attend you.
[*Exeunt JACOPO FOSCARI, Officer, &c.*]

Enter MEMMO and another Senator.

Mem. He's gone—we are too late:—
think you 'the Ten' 174

Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most
obdurate,

Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.

Mem. And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden

From us, the premier nobles of the
state, 180

As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumours,
Which—like the tales of spectres, that
are rife

Near ruin'd buildings—never have been
proved,

Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as
little 184

Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathom'd mysteries.

Mem. But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

Sen. Or Doge?

Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.

Sen. 'Tis the first station of the state,
and may 190

Be lawfully desired, and lawfully

Attain'd by noble aspirants.

Mem. To such
I leave it; though born noble, my ambi-
tion

Is limited: I'd rather be an unit
Of an united and imperial 'Ten,' 195

Than shine a lonely though a gilded
cipher.—

Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA, with a female Attendant.

Mar. What, no one?—I am wrong,
there still are two;

But they are senators.

Mem. Most noble lady,

Command us.

Mar. I command!—Alas! my life 200
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.

Mem. I understand thee, but I must
not answer.

Mar. [fiercely]. True—none dare
answer here save on the rack,

Or question save those—

Mem. [interrupting her]. High-born
dame! bethink thee

Where thou now art.

Mar. Where I now am!—It was 205
My husband's father's palace.

Mem. The Duke's palace.

Mar. And his son's prison!—True, I
have not forgot it;

And if there were no other nearer,
bitterer

Remembrances, would thank the illus-
trious Memmo

For pointing out the pleasures of the
place. 210

Mem. Be calm!

Mar. [looking up towards heaven]. I
am; but oh, thou eternal God!

Canst thou continue so, with such a
world?

Mem. Thy husband yet may be ab-
solved.

Mar. He is,
In heaven. I pray you, signor senator,

Speak not of that; you are a man of
office, 215

So is the Doge; he has a son at stake
Now, at this moment, and I have a
husband,

Or had; they are there within, or were
at least

An hour since, face to face, as judge and
culprit:

Will he condemn him?

Mem. I trust not.

Mar. But if
He does not, there are those will sentence
both. 221

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT I

Mem. They can.
Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness:—my husband's lost!

Mem. Not so; Justice is judge in Venice.

Mar. If it were so, There now would be no Venice. But let it ²²⁵
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons; but 'the Ten's' is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail!

[*A faint cry within.*

Sen. Hark!

Mem. 'Twas a cry of—

Mar. No, no; not my husband's Not Foscari's.

Mem. The voice was—

Mar. Not his: no. ²³⁰
He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,
Not his—not his—he'll die in silence.

[*A faint groan again within.*

Mem. What!
Again?

Mar. His voice! it seem'd so: I will not Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease

To love; but—no—no—no—it must have been ²³⁵
A fearful pang, which wrung a groan from him.

Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst thou Have him bear more than mortal pain in silence?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not

Left barren the great house of Foscari, Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life; ²⁴¹

I have endured as much in giving life To those who will succeed them, as they can In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs: And yet they wrung me till I could have shriek'd, ²⁴⁵

But did not; for my hope was to bring forth Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears.

Mem. All's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all's over; but I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself, And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you? ²⁵⁰

Off. A leech. The prisoner has fainted. [*Exit Officer.*

Mem. Lady,

'Twere better to retire.

Sen. [*offering to assist her*]. I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! I will tend him.

Mem. You! Remember, lady! Ingress is given to none within those chambers,

Except 'the Ten,' and their familiars.

Mar. Well, I know that none who enter there ²⁵⁶
return

As they have enter'd—many never; but They shall not balk my entrance.

Mem. Alas! this Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse, And worse suspense.

Mar. Who shall oppose me?

Mem. They Whose duty 'tis to do so.

Mar. 'Tis their duty ²⁶¹
To trample on all human feelings, all

Ties which bind man to man, to emulate The fiends who will one day requite them in

Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass. ²⁶⁵

Mem. It is impossible.

Mar. That shall be tried. Despair defies even despotism: there is That in my heart would make its way through hosts

With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors

Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way; ²⁷⁰

This is the Doge's palace; I am wife Of the Duke's son, the innocent Duke's son,

And they shall hear this!

Mem. It will only serve More to exasperate his judges.

Mar. What Are judges who give way to anger? ²⁷⁵

they Who do so are assassins. Give me way. [*Exit MARINA.*

Sen. Poor lady!

Mem. 'Tis mere desperation: she

Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.

But see, the officer returns.

[*The Officer passes over the stage with another person.*

Mem. I hardly ²⁸⁰
Thought that 'the Ten' had even this

touch of pity, Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is't pity to recall to feeling The wretch too happy to escape to death

By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last ²⁸⁵

Resource against the tyranny of pain?

SCENE I]

THE TWO FOSCARI

Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at once.

Sen. That's not their policy: they'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,²⁹⁰
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

Mem. Circumstance confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the Letter, which he says was written,²⁹⁵
Address'd to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-conveyed to Venice.

Mem. But as a culprit.

Sen. Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought,—so he avouches.³⁰⁰

Mem. The accusation of the bribes was proved.

Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annull'd by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late Chief of 'the Ten.'

Mem. Then why not clear him?

Sen. That³⁰⁵
They ought to answer; for it is well known

That Almore Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

Mem. There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose—³¹⁰

But here come two of 'the Ten;' let us retire.

[*Exeunt MEMMO and Senator.*]

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. [*addressing LOR.*]. That were too much: believe me, 'twas not meet
The trial should go further at this moment.

Lor. And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?

Bar. No,³¹⁶
That's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's state.

Lor. And had he not recover'd?

Bar. To relapse
Upon the least renewal.

Lor. 'Twas not tried.
Bar. 'Tis vain to murmur; the majority³²⁰
In council were against you.

Lor. Thanks to you, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.

Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,³²⁵
And bids us sit and see its sharp infiction,
Makes me wish——

Lor. What?
Bar. That you would sometimes feel,
As I do always.

Lor. Go to, you're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,³³⁰

And melted by a tear—a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy.

Bar. He shed
No tears.

Lor. He cried out twice.
Bar. A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,³³⁵

At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry

For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,

But wrung from pangs, and follow'd
By no prayers.³⁴⁰

Lor. He mutter'd many times between
his teeth,
But inarticulately.

Bar. That I heard not;
You stood more near him.

Lor. I did so.
Bar. Methought,

To my surprise too, you were touch'd
with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance³⁴⁵

When he was failing.
Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.

Bar. And have I not oft heard thee
name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?

Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavow'd, he'll be lamented.³⁵⁰

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT I

Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?

Lor. Wouldst thou have His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?

Bar. War with them too? *Lor.* With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.

Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife, 355
And the repress'd convulsion of the high

And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away 359

In stern serenity; these moved you not? [Exit LOREDANO.

He's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch moved me

More by his silence than a thousand outcries

Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into 365

The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used

To such sights. I must think no more of this,

Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes, their former injuries, and lose 370

The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content

With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts; but for the present, Foscari 375

Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in

The hall, and his own sufferings.—Lo! they come:

How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear 380

To look on them again in this extremity:
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

[Exit BARBARIGO.

ACT II

SCENE I.—A Hall in the DOGE's palace.

The DOGE and a SENATOR.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

Doge. Now;

I overlook'd it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen—

[*The DOGE sits down and signs the paper.*
There, signor.

Sen. [looking at the paper]. You have forgot; it is not signed. 5

Doge. Not sign'd? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin

To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipp'd the pen without effect.

Sen. [dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper before the DOGE].

Your hand, too, shakes, my lord: allow me, thus—

Doge. 'Tis done, I thank you.

Sen. Thus the act confirm'd 10
By you and by 'the Ten' gives peace to Venice.

Doge. 'Tis long since she enjoyed it: may it be

As long ere she resume her arms!

Sen. 'Tis almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare 14

With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.

Doge. No doubt:
I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her

Lady of Lombardy; it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem

The gems of Brescia and Ravenna;
Crema 20

And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my

reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

Sen. 'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

Doge. Perhaps so.

Sen. Which should be made manifest. 25

Doge. I have not complain'd, sir.

Sen. My good lord, forgive me.

Doge. For what?

Sen. My heart bleeds for you.

Doge. For me, signor?

Sen. And for your—

Doge. Stop!

Sen. It must have way, my lord:
I have too many duties towards you

And all your house, for past and present kindness, 30

Not to feel deeply for your son.

Doge. Was this

In your commission?

Sen. What, my lord?

Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's

sign'd;
Return with it to them who sent you.

Sen. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their reunion.

Doge. Say, when they will—now, even at this moment,
If it so please them: I am the state's servant.

Sen. They would accord some time for your repose.

Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which shall cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found

Where I should be, and what I have been ever. *[Exit SENATOR. The DOGE remains in silence.]*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!

Doge. Say on.

Att. The illustrious lady Foscari Requests an audience.

Doge. Bid her enter. Poor Marina! *[Exit Attendant. The DOGE remains in silence as before.]*

Enter MARINA.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child. Command my time, when not commanded by

The state.

Mar. I wish'd to speak to you of him.

Doge. Your husband?

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter!

Mar. I had obtain'd permission from 'the Ten'
To attend my husband for a limited number

Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. 'Tis revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. 'The Ten.'—When we had reach'd 'the Bridge of Sighs,'
Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first Demurr'd: a messenger was sent back to 'The Ten';—but as the court no longer

sate,
And no permission had been given in

writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that Until that high tribunal re-assembled
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,
The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourn'd; and till it meets,

'Tis dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,

They'll torture him again; and he and I Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the heavens!—
Oh God!

Dost thou see this?

Doge. Child—child—

Mar. *[abruptly].* Call me not 'child'!

You soon will have no children—you deserve none—

You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears

Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not weep

Their boys who died in battle, is it written

That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor

Stretch'd forth a hand to save them?

Doge. You behold me:

I cannot weep—I would I could; but if Each white hair on this head were a young life,

This ducal cap the diadem of earth, This ducal ring with which I wed the

waves
A talisman to still them—I'd give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know not Venice.

Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,

In all her mystery. Hear me—they who aim

At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
The sire's destruction would not save the son;

They work by different means to the same end,

And that is—but they have not conquer'd yet.

Mar. But they have crush'd.

Doge. Nor crush'd as yet—I live.

Mar. And your son,—how long will he live?

Doge. I trust,
For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash

boy,
With womanish impatience to return,

Hath ruin'd all by that detected letter:
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke:

Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiot exile, I had hopes—he

has quench'd them—
He must return.

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT II

Mar. To exile?
Doge. I have said it.
Mar. And can I not go with him?
Doge. You well know
 This prayer of yours was twice denied
 before
 By the assembled 'Ten,' and hardly now
 Will be accorded to a third request, 105
 Since aggravated errors on the part
 Of your lord renders them still more
 austere.
Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old
 human fiends,
 With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes,
 strange
 To tears save drops of dotage, with long
 white 110
 And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and
 heads
 As palsied as their hearts are hard, they
 counsel,
 Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
 Were no more than the feelings long
 extinguish'd
 In their accursed bosoms.
Doge. You know not— 115
Mar. I do—I do—and so should you,
 methinks—
 That these are demons: could it be else
 that
 Men, who have been of women born and
 suckled—
 Who have loved, or talk'd at least of
 love—have given
 Their hands in sacred vows—have danced
 their babes 120
 Upon their knees, perhaps have mourn'd
 above them—
 In pain, in peril, or in death—who are,
 Or were at least in seeming, human,
 could
 Do as they have done by yours, and you
 yourself—
 You, who abet them?
Doge. I forgive this, for 125
 You know not what you say.
Mar. You know it well,
 And feel it nothing.
Doge. I have borne so much,
 That words have ceased to shake me.
Mar. Oh, no doubt!
 You have seen your son's blood flow,
 and your flesh shook not;
 And after that, what are a woman's
 words? 130
 No more than woman's tears, that they
 should shake you.
Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of
 thine, I tell thee,
 Is no more in the balance weigh'd with that
 Which—but I pity thee, my poor
 Marina:
Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it
 from me; 135

Pity thy son! *Thou* pity!—'tis a word
 Strange to thy heart—how came it on
 thy lips?
Doge. I must bear these reproaches,
 though they wrong me.
 Couldst thou but read—
Mar. 'Tis not upon thy brow,
 Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts,—
 where then 140
 Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?
Doge (pointing downwards). There.
Mar. In the earth?
Doge. To which I am tending: when
 It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
 Loaded with marble, than the thoughts
 which press it
 Now, you will know me better.
Mar. Are you, then, 145
 Indeed, thus to be pitied?
Doge. Pitied! None
 Shall ever use that base word, with which
 men
 Cloak their soul's hoarded triumph, as a
 fit one
 To mingle with my name; that name
 shall be, 149
 As far as I have borne it, what it was
 When I received it.
Mar. But for the poor children
 Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not
 save
 You were the last to bear it.
Doge. Would it were so!
 Better for him he never had been born;
 Better for me.—I have seen our house
 dishonour'd. 155
Mar. That's false! A truer, nobler,
 trustier heart,
 More loving, or more loyal, never beat
 Within a human breast. I would not
 change
 My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
 Oppress'd but not disgraced, crush'd,
 overwhelm'd, 160
 Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
 In story or in fable, with a world
 To back his suit. Dishonour'd!—*he*
 dishonour'd!
 I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dis-
 honour'd!
 His name shall be her foulest, worst
 reproach, 165
 For what he suffers, not for what he did.
 'Tis ye who are all traitors, tyrant!—
 ye!
 Did you but love your country like this
 victim
 Who totters back in chains to tortures,
 and
 Submits to all things rather than to
 exile, 170
 You'd fling yourselves before him, and
 implore
 His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took
from me,
Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again? 175

Doge. Has he not been condemn'd?

Mar. Is none but guilt so?

Doge. Time may restore his memory—
I would hope so.
He was my pride, my—but 'tis useless
now—

I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were
ominous. 180

Mar. I say he's innocent! And were
he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

Doge. I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from
those duties; 185
Twice I demanded it, but was refused:
They must then be fulfill'd.

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
'The Ten.'

Doge. Who bears it?

Att. Noble Loredano.

Doge. He!—but admit him.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

Mar. Must I then retire?

Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if
this 190
Concerns your husband, and if not—
Well, signor,

Your pleasure? [*To LOREDANO entering.*]

Lor. I bear that of 'the Ten.'

Doge. They
Have chosen well their envoy.

Lor. 'Tis *their* choice
Which leads me here.

Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy.—Proceed.

Lor. We have decided.

Doge. We?

Lor. 'The Ten' in council. 196

Doge. What! have they met again, and
met without
Apprising me?

Lor. They wish'd to spare your feel-
ings,
No less than age.

Doge. That's new—when spared they
either?

I thank them, notwithstanding.

Lor. You know well
That they have power to act at their dis-
cretion, 201

With or without the presence of the Doge.

Doge. 'Tis some years since I learn'd
this, long before

I became Doge, or dream'd of such ad-
vancement.

You need not school me, signor; I sate in
That council when you were a young
patrician. 206

Lor. True, in my father's time; I have
heard him and

The admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your highness may remember them; they
both

Died suddenly.

Doge. And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.

Lor. No doubt: yet most men like to
live their days out. 212

Doge. And did not they?

Lor. The grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.

Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically?

Lor. So far from strange, that never
was there death 216

In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think you not so?

Doge. What should I think of mortals?

Lor. That they have mortal foes.

Doge. I understand you;
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in
all things. 220

Lor. You best know if I should be so.

Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have
heard

Foul rumours were abroad; I have also
read 223

Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

Lor. Who dares say so?

Doge. I!—'Tis true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter

As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:

I never work'd by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret

means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.

The proof is, your existence.

Lor. I fear not.

Doge. You have no cause, being what I
am; but were I 235

That you would have me thought, you
long ere now

Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I
care not.

Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,

That is, by open means.

Doge. But I, good signor, 240
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere

duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that
they know

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT II

Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down:

be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held
you ²⁴⁵

At so much price as to require your ab-
sence,

A word of mine had set such spirits to
work

As would have made you nothing. But in
all things

I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have
strain'd ²⁵⁰

(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond
what

I could enforce for my authority,
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,

I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the high altar, even unto

The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,

The health, the pride, and welfare of the
state. ²⁵⁹

And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'Tis decreed,
That, without further repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn
guilt is

('The Ten,' dispensing with the stricter
law

Which still prescribes the Question till a
full ²⁶⁵

Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avow'd his crime in not denying that

The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,

And sail in the same galley which con-
vey'd him. ²⁷⁰

Mar. Thank God! At least they will
not drag him more

Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest

doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here,
could

Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought,
my daughter. ²⁷⁶

Mar. No, 'twas too human. May I
share his exile?

Lor. Of this 'the Ten' said nothing.

Mar. So I thought!
That were too human, also. But it was not
inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. [to the Doge]. Then, father,
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus
much: [To LOREDANO]

And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavour.

Mar.

And you, signor?

Lor. Lady!

'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of —

Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these
things? ²⁸⁸

Mar. A prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!
It galls you:—well, you are his equal, as
You think; but that you are not, nor
would be, ²⁹¹

Were he a peasant:—well, then, you're a
prince,

A princely noble; and what then am I?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then,
is ²⁹⁵

The presence that should silence my free
thoughts?

Lor. The presence of your husband's
judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest
word

That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep

Those maxims for your mass of scared
mechanics, ³⁰⁰

Your merchants, your Dalmatian and
Greek slaves,

Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And mask'd nobility, your sbirri, and

Your spies, your galley and your other
slaves,

To whom your midnight carryings off and
drownings, ³⁰⁵

Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or
under

The water's level; your mysterious meet-
ings,

And unknown dooms, and sudden execu-
tions,

Your 'Bridge of Sighs,' your strangling
chamber, and

Your torturing instruments, have made ye
seem ³¹⁰

The beings of another and worse world!
Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know
ye;

Have known and proved your worst, in
the infernal

Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him:—you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear from
you, ³¹⁶

Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady! words 319
Utter'd within these walls I bear no further
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's
service.

Doge! have you aught in answer?

Doge. Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My mission *here* is to the Doge.

Doge. Then say 325
The Doge will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father——

Lor. I remember *mine*.—Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke.

[Exit LOREDANO.

Mar. Are you content? 330

Doge. I am what you behold.

Mar. And that's a mystery.

Doge. All things are so to mortals;
who can read them

Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume—man, and pored
upon 335

Those black and bloody leaves, his heart
and brain,

But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins

We find in others, nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of fortune;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her acci-
dents, 341

And when we cry out against Fate, 'twere
well

We should remember Fortune can take
nought

Save what she *gave*—the rest was naked-
ness,

And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle 346

With as we may, and least in humblest
stations,

Where hunger swallows all in one low
want,

And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all
passions 350

Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow—clay from first to
last,

The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon
days, 355

Our days on seasons; our whole being on
Something which is not *us*!—So, we are
slaves,

The greatest as the meanest—nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less

Depends upon a straw than on a storm;
And when we think we lead, we are most
led, 361

And still towards death, a thing which
comes as much

Without our act or choice as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinn'd in some
old world, 364

And *this* is hell: the best is, that it is not
Eternal.

Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

Doge. And how then shall we judge
each other,

Who are all earth, and I, who am call'd
upon

To judge my son? I have administer'd
My country faithfully—victoriously—

I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled
realms; 372

And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.

Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of
such things, 375

So I be left with him.

Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.

Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.

Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?

Mar. I know not, reckon not—
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman— 380

Anywhere, where we might respire
unfetter'd,

And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.

Doge. What, wouldst thou have a
renegade for husband,

And turn him into traitor?

Mar. He is none! 385
The country is the traitress, which thrusts
forth

Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou
deem

None rebels except subjects? The prince
who

Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.

Doge. I cannot 391
Charge me with such a breach of faith.

Mar. No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st such laws as make old
Draco's

A code of mercy by comparison.

Doge. I found the law; I did not make
it. Were I 393

A subject, still I might find parts and
portions

Fit for amendment; but as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house,
the charter

Left by our fathers.

Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT II

Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is—a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has
bequeath'd
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times,
when 405
The people sway'd by senates.

Mar. Rather say,
Groan'd under the stern oligarchs.

Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the world: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of 409
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintain'd in
vigour.

Mar. This means that you are more a
Doge than father.

Doge. It means, I am more citizen
than either. 415

If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

Mar. Accursed be the city where the laws
Would stifle nature's!

Doge. Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them
all, 420

Not without feeling, but I would have
given them

To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse 425
She might decree.

Mar. And this is patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage 'Ten,'
With all its jealousy, will hardly war
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon. 430

Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.

Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father?

Doge. That he obey
The laws.

Mar. And nothing more? Will
you not see him 435
Ere he depart? It may be the last time.

Doge. The last!—my boy!—the last
time I shall see

My last of children! Tell him I will come.
[*Exeunt.*]

Which never echo'd but to sorrow's
sounds,

The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clank'd, the
groan 5

Of death, the imprecation of despair!
And yet for this I have return'd to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that time,
which wears

The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and
here 10

Must I consume my own, which never beat
For Venice but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest, when
wheeling

High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these
which [Approaching the wall.

Are scrawl'd along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the
names 17

Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words
of

A grief too great for many. This stone
page 20

Holds like an epitaph their history;
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's
record

Upon the bark of some tall tree, which
bears 24

His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
I recognise some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by
wretches. [He engraves his name.

Enter a Familiar of 'the Ten.'

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down; 30
I am past hunger: but my lips are parch'd—
The water!

Fam. There.

Jac. Fos. [after drinking]. I thank you:
I am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you
that

Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fos. Till when?

Fam. I know not.—It is also in my
orders 35

That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fos. Ah! they relent, then—I had
ceased to hope it:

'Twas time.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My best beloved!

Jac. Fos. [embracing her]. My true
wife,
And only friend! What happiness!

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Prison of JACOPO FOSCARI.*

Jac. Fos. [solus]. No light, save yon
faint gleam which shows me walls

Mar. We'll part
No more!

Jac. Fos. How! wouldst thou share a
dungeon?

Mar. Ay, 40
The rack, the grave, all—anything with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that—all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.

How dost thou? How are those worn
limbs? Alas! 46

Why do I ask? Thy paleness—

Jac. Fos. 'Tis the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like
thine, 50

For thou art pale too, my Marina!

Mar. 'Tis
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous
smoke, 56

Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even
thine eyes—

No, not thine eyes—they sparkle—how
they sparkle!

Jac. Fos. And thine!—but I am
blinded by the torch.

Mar. As I had been without it.
Couldst thou see here? 60

Jac. Fos. Nothing at first; but use and
time had taught me

Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the
winds 64

Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice: but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

Mar. What?

Jac. Fos. My name: look, 'tis there—
recorded next 69

The name of him who here preceded me,
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him?

Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of
men's ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such
stern walls

Were never piled on high save o'er the
dead,

Or those who soon must be so.—*What of
him?* 75

Thou askest.—What of me? may soon be
ask'd,

With the like answer—doubt and dreadful
surmise—

Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. *I speak of thee!*

Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then
shall speak of me:

The tyranny of silence is not lasting, 80
And, though events be hidden, just men's
groans

Will burst all cerement, even a living
grave's!

I do not doubt my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.

Mar. Thy life is safe. 84

Jac. Fos. And liberty?

Mar. The mind should make its own.

Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but
'tis a sound,

music most impressive, but too
transient:

The mind is much, but is not all. The
mind

Hath nerved me to endure the risk of
death, 89

And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,

Or with a cry which rather shamed my
judges

Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are
things

More woful—such as this small dungeon,
where

I may breathe many years.

Mar. Alas! and this 95
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is
prince.

Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely
aid me to endure it.

My doom is common; many are in
dungeons,

But none like mine, so near their father's
palace; 100

But then my heart is sometimes high, and
hope

Will stream along those moted rays of
light

Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day: for, save the gaoler's torch,

And a strange firefly, which was quickly
caught 105

Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!

I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;

It sinks in solitude: my soul is social. 110

Mar. I will be with thee.

Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so!
But that they never granted—nor will grant,

And I shall be alone: no men; no books—
Those lying likenesses of lying men.

I ask'd for even those outlines of their
kind, 115

Which they term annals, history, what you
will,

Which men bequeath as portraits, and
they were

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT III

Refused me,—so these walls have been my study,

More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains,
than is

The Hall not far from hence, which bears
on high 121

Hundreds of doges, and their deeds and
dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of
their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fos. I know it—look!
[He points to his limbs, as referring to
the question which he had undergone.

Mar. No—no—no more of that: even
they relent 125
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fos. What then?

Mar. That you
Return to Candia.

Jac. Fos. Then my last hope's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas
Venice;

I could support the torture, there was
something 129

In my native air that buoy'd my spirits up
Like a ship on the ocean toss'd by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course; but *there*,
afar,

In that accursed isle of slaves and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seem'd mouldering in my
bosom, 136

And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.
Mar. And *here*?

Jac. Fos. At once—by better means,
as briefer.

What! would they even deny me my sire's
sepulchre,

As well as home and heritage?

Mar. My husband! 140
I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine

For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is passion, and not patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and
air, 146

I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched!
Mar. And yet you see how, from their
banishment 151

Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remain'd of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean Rome; 155
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth

From my own land, like the old patriarchs,
seeking

Another region, with their flocks and
herds;

Had I been cast out like the Jews from
Zion, 160

Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late
country,

And many thoughts; but afterwards
address'd

Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state; perhaps I
could 166

Have borne this—though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fos. Ay—we but hear 169
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can
number

The hearts which broke in silence at that
parting,

Or after their departure; of that malady
Which calls up green and native fields to
view 174

From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading
them?

That melody, which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing
sorrow 179

Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous
thought,

And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is
strength,

I say,—the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country, can love
nothing. 185

Mar. Obey her, then: 'tis she that puts
thee forth.

Jac. Fos. Ay, there it is; 'tis like a
mother's curse

Upon my soul—the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by
nations,

Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitch'd together—I'm
alone. 191

Mar. You shall be so no more—I will
go with thee.

Jac. Fos. My best Marina!—and our
children?

Mar. They,
I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy (which holds all ties
As threads, which may be broken at her
pleasure), 196

Will not be suffer'd to proceed with us.

Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes. With many a pang.
But—I can leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when
exacted 201

By duties paramount; and 'tis our first
On earth to bear.

Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?

Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have
undergone 206

Of late, is mercy.

Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding
distance,

While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart;
you never 211

Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbed vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them
not. 215

Mar. I will divide this with you. Let
us think

Of our departure from this much-loved
city
(Since you must love it, as it seems), and
this

Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles: we must sail ere night.

Jac. Fos. That's sudden. Shall I not
behold my father? 222

Mar. You will.

Jac. Fos. Where?

Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber—
He said not which. I would that you could
bear

Your exile as he bears it.

Jac. Fos. Blame him not. 225
I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his aged head
Suspicion from 'the Ten,' and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated!

What pangs are those they have spared
you?

Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now,
as 'twas

Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true, 235
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves—away—
away—

Be it to the earth's end, from this abhor'd,
Unjust, and—

Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country?

Mar. Men and angels!
The blood of myriads reeking up to
heaven, 242

The groans of slaves in chains, and men in
dungeons,

Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires,
and subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads;
and 245

Though last, not least, thy silence! *Couldst*
thou say

Aught in its favour, who would praise like
thee?

Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since
so it must be,

To our departure. Who comes here?

Enter LOREDANO, attended by Familiars.

Lor. [to the Familiars]. Retire,
But leave the torch.

[Exeunt the two Familiars.]

Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could
have drawn 251

Such presence hither.

Lor. 'Tis not the first time
I have visited these places.

Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well re-
warded. 254

Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?

Lor. Neither are of my office, noble
lady!

I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce 'the Ten's' decree.

Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known. 260

Lor. As how?

Mar. I have inform'd him, not so
gently,

Doubtless, as your nice feelings would
prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues; but he
knew it.

If you come for our thanks, take them, and
hence!

The dungeon gloom is deep enough with-
out you, 265

And full of reptiles, not less loathsome,
though

Their sting is honest.

Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you:
What can avail such words?

Mar. To let him know
That he is known.

Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

Mar. I have some sons, sir, 270
Will one day thank you better.

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT III

Lor. You do well
To nurse them wisely. Foscari—you
know

Your sentence, then?
Jac. Fos. Return to Candia?
Lor. True—

For life.
Jac. Fos. Not long.

Lor. I said—for life.
Jac. Fos. And I

Repeat—not long.
Lor. A year's imprisonment 275

In Canea—afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

Jac. Fos. Both the same to me: the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is't true my wife accompanies me?

Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.

Mar. Who obtain'd that justice?
Lor. One who wars not with women.

Mar. But oppresses
Men; howsoever let him have my thanks
For the only boon I would have ask'd or
taken

From him or such as he is.
Lor. He receives them

As they are offer'd.
Mar. May they thrive with him 285

So much!—no more.
Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole

mission?
Because we have brief time for prepara-

tion,
And you perceive your presence doth

disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

Mar. Nobler!
Lor. How nobler?

Mar. As more generous! 290
We say the 'generous steed' to express the

purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I've learnt,

although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of

bronze),
From those Venetians who have skimm'd

the coasts
Of Egypt and her neighbour Araby: 295

And why not say as soon the 'generous
man'?

If race be aught, it is in qualities
More than in years; and mine, which is as

old
As yours, is better in its product, nay—

Look not so stern—but get you back, and
pore 300

Upon your genealogic tree's most green
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and

there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have

blush'd
For such a son—thou cold inveterate
hater!

Jac. Fos. Again, Marina!
Mar. Again! still, Marina.

See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?

Let him partake it!
Jac. Fos. That were difficult.

Mar. Nothing more easy. He par-
takes it now—

Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes

it. 311
A few brief words of truth shame the

devil's servants
No less than master; I have probed his soul

A moment, as the eternal fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks

from me! 315
With death, and chains, and exile in his

hand,
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit;

They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold

heart. 319
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,

And he but live, for him the very worst
Of destinies: each day secures him more

His tempter's.
Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so; and who hath made
us mad?

Lor. Let her go on; it irks not me.
Mar. That's false! 325

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You

came
To be sued to in vain—to mark our tears,

And hoard our groans—to gaze upon the
wreck

Which you have made a prince's son—my
husband; 330

In short, to trample on the fallen—an
office

The hangman shrinks from, as all men
from him!

How have you sped? We are wretched,
signor, as

Your plots could make, and vengeance
could desire us,

And how feel you?
Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted: 335
They feel not, but no less are shiver'd.

Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,

The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly

Till he himself shall brood in it alone. 340

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fos. My father!
Doge [embracing him]. Jacopo! my

son—my son!
Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it

is since I

Have heard thee name my name—our name!

Doge. My boy!
Couldst thou but know—

Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmur'd.

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. *Doge*, look there! 345

[*She points to LOREDANO.*]

Doge. I see the man—what mean'st thou?

Mar. Caution!

Lor. Being
The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice; 350

As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long

Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes: worse he could not.

Jac. Fos. Father, let not these 355
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it—

is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

Doge. You behold
These white hairs!

Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine

Will never be so white. Embrace me, father! 360

I loved you ever—never more than now.
Look to my children—to your last child's children:

Let them be all to you which he was once, And never be to you what I am now.

May I not see them also?

Mar. No—not here. 365

Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent anywhere.

Mar. I would that they beheld their father in

A place which would not mingle fear with love,

To freeze their young blood in its natural current.

They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that 370

Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw.
Well,

I know his fate may one day be their heritage;

But let it only be their heritage,
And not their present fee. Their senses, though

Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damps, too, and yon thick

green wave 376

Which floats above the place where we now stand—

A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,

Might strike them: *this is not their atmosphere,* 380

However you—and you—and most of all,
As worthiest—you, sir, noble Loredano!

May breathe it without prejudice.

Jac. Fos. I have not
Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.

I shall depart, then, without meeting them? 385

Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my chamber.

Jac. Fos. And must I leave them—all?
Lor. You must.

Jac. Fos. Not one?
Lor. They are the state's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.
Lor. They are, in all maternal things.

Mar. That is
In all things painful. If they're sick, they will 390

Be left to me to tend them; should they die,
To me to bury and to mourn; but if

They live, they'll make you soldiers, senators,

Slaves, exiles—what you will; or if they are Females with portions, brides and bribes for nobles! 395

Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers!

Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.

Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where the genial wind

Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?
Lor. 'Twas so

When I came here. The galley floats within 400

A bow-shot of the 'Riva di Schiavoni.'
Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and

Prepare my children to behold their father.
Doge. Be firm, my son!

Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavour.
Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested

dungeon, 405
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.

Lor. And present
Liberation.

Doge. He speaks truth.
Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 'tis

Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.

He knows this, or he had not sought to change them. 410

But I reproach not.
Lor. The time narrows, signor.

Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT III]

To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back 415
Even on these dull damp walls, and—

Doge. Boy! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not on
the rack

To shame him, and they cannot shame
him now.

They will relieve his heart—that too kind
heart—

And I will find an hour to wipe away 420
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep
now,

But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.

Lor. [to the Familiar]. The torch, there!

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral

pyre,

With Loredano mourning like an heir.
Doge. My son, you are feeble; take

this hand.

Jac. Fos. Alas! 426

Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

Lor. Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 'twill

sting you. Signor,

Stand off! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we

are plunged, 431

No hand of ours would stretch itself to
meet it.

Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar
gave you;

It could not save, but will support you
ever. [Exeunt.]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Ducal Palace.*

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. And have you confidence in such
a project?

Lor. I have.

Bar. 'Tis hard upon his years.

Lor. Say rather

Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.

Bar. 'Twill break his heart.

Lor. Age has no heart to break.

He has seen his son's half broken, and,
except 5

A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.

Bar. In his countenance, I grant you,
never;

But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief

Had nought to envy him within. Where is
he? 10

Lor. In his own portion of the palace,
with

His son, and the whole race of Foscari.

Bar. Bidding farewell.

Lor. A last. As soon he shall
Bid to his dukedom.

Bar. When embarks the son?

Lor. Forthwith—when this long leave
is taken. 'Tis 15

Time to admonish them again.

Bar. Forbear;

Retrench not from their moments.

Lor. Not I, now

We have higher business for our own.

This day

Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment,

And that is vengeance.

Bar. In my mind, too deep. 21

Lor. 'Tis moderate—not even life for
life, the rule

Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my

uncle's.

Bar. Did not the Doge deny this
strongly?

Lor. Doubtless. 25

Bar. And did not this shake your
suspicion?

Lor. No.

Bar. But if this deposition should take
place

By our united influence in the Council,
It must be done with all the deference

Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for

aught

I care, depute the Council on their knees
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope), to beg him

To have the courtesy to abdicate. 35

Bar. What if he will not?

Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.

Bar. But will the laws uphold us?

Lor. What laws?—'The Ten' are
laws; and if they were not,

I will be legislator in this business.

Bar. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you, 40

Our powers are such.

Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,

And twice it was refused.

Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.

Bar. Unask'd?

Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:

If they were from his heart, he may be
thankful: 46

If not, 'twill punish his hypocrisy.

Come, they are met by this time; let us
join them,

And be *thou* fix'd in purpose for this once.

I have prepared such arguments as will
not 50

SCENE I]

THE TWO FOSCARI

Fail to move them, and to remove him:
since

Their thoughts, their objects, have been
sounded, do not

You, with your wonted scruples, teach us
pause,

And all will prosper.

Bar. Could I but be certain 54
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.

Lor. He is safe, I tell you;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 'tis his throne
Alone is aim'd at.

Bar. But discarded princes 60
Are seldom long of life.

Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.

Bar. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long
enough, and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in to
council!

[*Exeunt LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.*]

Enter MEMMO and a Senator.

Sen. A summons to 'the Ten'! why
so?

Mem. 'The Ten' 65
Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their
purpose

By previous proclamation. We are sum-
mon'd—

That is enough.

Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.

Mem. You will know why anon,
If you obey: and, if not, you no less 71
Will know why you should have obey'd.

Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, but—

Mem. In Venice 'but' 's a traitor.
But me no 'buts,' unless you would pass
o'er

The Bridge which few repass.

Sen. I am silent.
Mem. Why 75

Thus hesitate? 'The Ten' have call'd in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the senate—you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honour'd by the choice or chance
which leads us 80

To mingle with a body so august.

Sen. Most true. I say no more.
Mem. As we hope, signor,

And all may honestly, (that is, all those
Of noble blood may,) one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the senate's 85
Chosen delegates a school of wisdom,
To be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

Sen. Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.

Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are
worth 90
Something, at least to you or me.

Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.

Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying 'the Ten's' summons.

Sen. All are not met, but I am of your
thought 96
So far—let's in.

Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils—we will not be least
so. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI, and
MARINA.*

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must
and will depart, 99

Yet—yet—I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time, as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annex'd they please,
But let me still return.

Doge. Son Jacopo, 105
Go and obey our country's will: 'tis not
For us to look beyond.

Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less
so 110

Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterred ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in
earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting
round

To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty. 116

Mar. My husband! let us on: this but
prolongs
Our sorrow.

Jac. Fos. But we are not summon'd yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurl'd:—who
knows?

The wind may change.
Mar. And if it do, it will not 120
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the
galley's oars

Will quickly clear the harbour.

Jac. Fos. O ye elements!
Where are your storms?

Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for
prosperous 125

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT IV

And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian
waves,

And waken Auster, sovereign of the
tempest! 130

Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corpse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which
skirt

The land I love, and never shall see more!
Mar. And wish you this with me
beside you?

Jac. Fos. No— 135
No—not for thee, too good, too kind!
May'st thou

Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of heaven howl down
the Gulf, 140

And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them, as an
offering

To appease the waves. The billow which
destroys me 145
Will be more merciful than man, and bear
me

Dead, but *still* bear me to a native grave,
From fishers' hands, upon the desolate
strand,

Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er
received

One lacerated like the heart which then
Will be.—But wherefore breaks it not?
why live I? 151

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with
time, to master

Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one; why,
What is this to the things thou hast borne
in silence— 155

Imprisonment and actual torture?

Jac. Fos. Double, 160
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are
right,

It must be borne. Father, your blessing.
Doge. Would

It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.
Jac. Fos. Forgive—

Doge. What?

Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my
birth, 160

And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestow'd upon me as my sire.

Mar. What hast thou done?

Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chasten'd and visited, I needs must think

That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!

Mar. Fear not: *that's* reserved 170
For your oppressors.

Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.

Mar. Hope not?

Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they
have inflicted.

Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A
thousand-fold

May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon
them! 174

Jac. Fos. They may repent.

Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore—
the wind

Is rising—we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once
more, father,

Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own
trembles! 180

Jac. Fos. No—you mistake; 'tis yours
that shakes, my father.

Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fos. No—nothing.

[*To the Officer.*

Lend me your arm, good signor.

Offi. You turn pale—

Let me support you—paler—ho! some
aid there!

Some water!

Mar. Ah, he is dying!

Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready— 185

My eyes swim strangely—where's the
door?

Mar. Away!

Let me support him—my best love! Oh,
God!

How faintly beats this heart—this pulse!

Jac. Fos. The light!

Is it the light?—I am faint.

[*Officer presents him with water.*

Offi. He will be better, 189

Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father—wife—

Your hands!

Mar. There's death in that damp,
clammy grasp.

Oh God!—My Foscari, how fare you?

Jac. Fos. Well! [*He dies.*

Offi. He's gone!

Doge. He's free.

Mar. No—no, he is not dead;

There must be life yet in that heart—he
could not

Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter!

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man! 195

I am no daughter now—thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!

Offi. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,

Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains ²⁰⁰

To those who know to honour them.

Offi. I must Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the signory from me, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:

While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject— ²⁰⁵

Now he is mine—my broken-hearted boy!
[Exit Officer.]

Mar. And I must live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

Mar. My children! true—they live, and I must live
To bring them up to serve the state, and die

As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings ²¹⁰

Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What! You feel it then at last—you!—Where is now

The stoic of the state?
Doge [throwing himself down by the body]. Here!

Mar. Ay, weep on! I thought you had no tears—you hoarded them ²¹⁵

Until they are useless; but weep on! he never

Shall weep more—never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Lor. What's here?

Mar. Ah! the devil come to insult the dead! Avaunt!

Incaruate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground.
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it ²²⁰

A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,

But pass'd here merely on our path from council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

Mar. [pointing to the Doge, who is still on the ground by his son's body].

He's busy, look,

About the business you provided for him, Are ye content?

Bar. We will not interrupt

A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them, Then leave them.

Doge [rising]. Sirs, I am ready.

Bar. No—not now.

Lor. Yet 'twas important.

Doge. If 'twas so, I can Only repeat—I am ready.

Bar. It shall not be ²³⁰
Just now, though Venice totter'd o'er the deep

Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you bring

Are evil, you may say them; nothing further

Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there; ²³⁵

If they be good, say on; you need not fear That they can comfort me.

Bar. I would they could!

Doge. I spoke not to you, but to Loredano.

He understands me.

Mar. Ah! I thought it would be so.

Doge. What mean you?

Mar. Lo! there is the blood beginning ²⁴⁰

To flow through the dead lips of Foscari—The body bleeds in presence of the assassin. *[To LOREDANO.]*

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold How death itself bears witness to thy deeds!

Doge. My child! this is a phantasy of grief. ²⁴⁵

Bear hence the body. *[To his attendants.]* Signors, if it please you,

Within an hour I'll hear you.

[Exeunt DOGE, MARINA, and attendants with the body. Manent LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.]

Bar. He must not

Be troubled now.

Lor. He said himself that nought Could give him trouble further.

Bar. These are words; But grief is lonely, and the breaking in Upon it barbarous.

Lor. Sorrow preys upon ²⁵¹

Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it From its sad visions of the other world,

Than calling it at moments back to this. The busy have no time for tears.

Bar. And therefore ²⁵⁵
You would deprive this old man of all business?

Lor. The thing's decreed. The Giunta and 'the Ten'

Have made it law—who shall oppose that law?

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT IV

Bar. Humanity!
Lor. Because his son is dead? 259
Bar. And yet unburied.
Lor. Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have
suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not—once past.
Bar. I'll not consent.
Lor. You have consented to
All that's essential—leave the rest to me.
Bar. Why press his abdication now?
Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt 266
The public benefit; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.
Bar. You have a son.
Lor. I have—and had a father. 270
Bar. Still so inexorable?
Lor. Still.
Bar. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.
Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle—I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be, 275
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal; he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious
maladies. 280
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons—and he had four—were dead,
without
My dabbling in vile drugs.
Bar. And art thou sure 285
He dealt in such?
Lor. Most sure.
Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.
Lor. And so he seem'd not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.
Bar. The attained
And foreign traitor?
Lor. Even so: when he, 289
After the very night in which 'the Ten'
(Join'd with the Doge) decided his destruc-
tion,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
'The good day or good night?' his Doge-
ship answer'd,
'That he in truth had pass'd a night of
vigil, 295
In which (he added with a gracious smile),
There often has been question about you.
'Twas true; the question was the death
resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doom'd,
smiled on him 300

With deadly cozenage, eight long months
beforehand—
Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Car-
magnuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his
brethren—
I never smiled on them.
Bar. Was Carmagnuola 305
Your friend?
Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.
In early life its foe, but, in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.
Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He 309
Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to our sway.
Lor. The Romans (and we ape them)
gave a crown
To him who took a city; and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen 314
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroy'd by him, or through him, the
account
Were fearfully against him, although
narrow'd 319
To private havoc, such as between him
And my dead father.
Bar. Are you then thus fix'd?
Lor. Why, what should change me?
Bar. That which changes me:
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplish'd,
when
The old man is deposed, his name
degraded. 325
His sons all dead, his family depress'd.
And you and yours triumphant, shall you
sleep?
Lor. More soundly.
Bar. That's an error, and you'll
find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.
Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will 330
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and,
pointing towards
The ducal palace, marshal me to
vengeance.
Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There
is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the
heart. 337

Enter an Officer.
Lor. Where go you, sirrah?
Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Bar. Their Vault has been often open'd of late years.

Lor. 'Twill be full soon, and may be closed for ever.

Offi. May I pass on?

Lor. You may.

Bar. How bears the Doge This last calamity?

Offi. With desperate firmness. In presence of another he says little, 345 But I perceive his lips move now and then; And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining Apartment, mutter forth the words—'My son!'

Scarce audibly. I must proceed.

[*Exit Officer.*]

Bar. This stroke Will move all Venice in his favour.

Lor. Right! 350 We must be speedy: let us call together The delegates appointed to convey The Council's resolution.

Bar. I protest Against it at this moment.

Lor. As you please—I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless, And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine. 356

[*Exeunt BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.—*The DOGE's Apartment.*

The DOGE and Attendants.

Att. My lord, the deputation is in waiting;

But add, that if another hour would better Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are like. Let them approach. [*Exit Attendant.*]

An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.

Doge. What command? 5

Offi. A melancholy one—to call the attendance

Of—

Doge. True—true—true; I crave your pardon. I

Begin to fail in apprehension, and Wax very old—old almost as my years. Till now I fought them off, but they begin To overtake me.

Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory and the Chief of the Ten.

Noble men, your pleasure! 11

Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole

With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more—no more of that.

Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do 15

Accept it as 'tis given—proceed.

Chief of the Ten. 'The Ten',

With a selected Giunta from the senate

Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,

Having deliberated on the state

Of the republic, and the o'erwhelming

cares 20

Which, at this moment, doubly must

oppress

Your years, so long devoted to your

country,

Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,

Now to solicit from your wisdom (which

Upon reflection must accord in this), 25

The resignation of the ducal ring,

Which you have worn so long and

venerably:

And to prove that they are not ungrateful,

nor

Cold to your years and services, they add

An appanage of twenty hundred golden

Ducats, to make retirement not less

splendid 31

Than should become a sovereign's retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly?

Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?

Doge. No—Have you done?

Chief of the Ten. I have spoken.

Twenty-four

Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many

seconds.

Chief of the Ten. Will now retire. We

Doge. Stay! four and twenty hours

Will alter nothing which I have to say.

Chief of the Ten. Speak!

Doge. When I twice before reiterated

My wish to abdicate, it was refused me:

And not alone refused, but ye exacted

An oath from me that I would never more

Renew this instance. I have sworn to die

In full exertion of the functions which

My country call'd me here to exercise, 45

According to my honour and my

conscience—

I cannot break my oath.

Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not

To the alternative of a decree,

Instead of your compliance.

Doge. Providence

Prolongs my days to prove and chasten

me; 50

But ye have no right to reproach my

length

Of days, since every hour has been the

country's.

I am ready to lay down my life for her,

As I have laid down dearer things than

life: 55

But for my dignity—I hold it of

The whole republic: when the general will

Is manifest, then you shall all be answer'd.

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT V

Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot avail you aught.

Doge. I can submit to all things, But nothing will advance; no, not a moment. 60

What you decree—decree.

Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we Return to those who sent us?

Doge. You have heard me.

Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire.

[*Exeunt the Deputation, &c.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. My lord, The noble dame Marina craves an audience. 64

Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My lord, if I intrude— Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone! Alone, come all the world around me, I Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will, and for the sake of those who are, Endeavour—Oh, my husband!

Doge. Give it way: 70 I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived, So form'd for gentle privacy of life, So loving, so beloved; the native of Another land, and who so blest and blessing

As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting 75 Unto his happiness and mine save not To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other men's

Imperfect happiness or high ambition, By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly. 80

The country and the people whom he loved, The prince of whom he was the elder born, And—

Doge. Soon may be a prince no longer.

Mar. How?

Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now aim At my too long worn diadem and ring. Let them resume the gewgaws!

Mar. Oh, the tyrants! 86 In such an hour too!

Doge. 'Tis the fittest time;

An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And Will you not now resent it?—Oh, for vengeance!

But he, who, had he been enough protected, 90

Might have repaid protection in this moment,

Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so Against his country, had he a thousand lives

Instead of that—

Mar. They tortured from him. This May be pure patriotism. I am a woman: To me my husband and my children were Country and home. I loved him—how I loved him! 97

I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as

The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is gone,

And I, who would have given my blood for him, 100

Have nought to give but tears! But could I compass

The retribution of his wrongs!—Well, well!

I have sons, who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him

Bow'd down by such oppression; yes, I thought 105

That I would rather look upon his corpse Than his prolong'd captivity:—I am punish'd

For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he—

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier. 110

Doge. And he is in his shroud!

Mar. Come, come, old man! [Exeunt the DOGE and MARINA.]

Enter BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.

Bar. [to an Attendant]. Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence, With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Bar. Let us return, then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot. 115 We have the implicit order of the Giunta To await their coming here, and join them in

Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Bar. And will they press their answer on the Doge?

Lor. 'Twas his own wish that all should be done promptly. 120

He answer'd quickly, and must so be answer'd;

His dignity is look'd to, his estate
Cared for—what would he more?

Bar. Die in his robes:
He could not have lived long; but I have
done ¹²⁴

My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me
hither?

Lor. 'Twas fit that some one of such
different thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false
tongues

Should whisper that a harsh majority ¹³⁰
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

Bar. And not less, I must needs think,
for the sake

Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating*; ¹³⁶

'Tis thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you
I owe by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in ¹⁴⁰
Your Giunta's duties.

Lor. How!—my Giunta!
Bar. Yours!

They speak your language, watch your
nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they
not *yours*?

Lor. You talk unwarily. 'Twere best
they hear not
This from you.

Bar. Oh! they'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine; they have
gone beyond ¹⁴⁶

Even their exorbitance of power: and when
This happens in the most condemn'd and
abject

States, stung humanity will rise to check it.
Lor. You talk but idly.

Bar. That remains for proof. ¹⁵⁰
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence?

Att. He shall be inform'd.
[*Exit Attendant.*]

Bar. The Duke is with his son.
Chief of the Ten. If it be so,

We will remit him till the rites are over.
Let us return. 'Tis time enough to-
morrow. ¹⁵⁵

Lor. [*aside to Bar.*] Now the rich
man's hell-fire upon your tongue,
Unquench'd, unquenchable! I'll have it
torn

From its vile babbling roots, till you shall
utter

Nothing but sobs through blood, for this!
Sage signors,

I pray ye be not hasty.

Bar. [*Aloud to the others.* But be human! ¹⁶⁰
Lor. See, the Duke comes!

Enter the DOGE.

Doge. I have obey'd your summons.
Chief of the Ten. We come once more
to urge our past request.

Doge. And I to answer.
Chief of the Ten. What?
Doge. My only answer.

You have heard it.
Chief of the Ten. Hear you then the
last decree,

Definitive and absolute!
Doge. To the point— ¹⁶⁵

To the point! I know of old the forms of
office,

And gentle preludes to strong acts.—Goon!
Chief of the Ten. You are no longer
Doge; you are released

From your imperial oath as sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the ap-
panage ¹⁷¹

Already mention'd in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from
hence,

Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.

Doge. That last clause, ¹⁷⁵
I am proud to say, would not enrich the
treasury.

Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!
Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari!

Doge. If I could have foreseen that my
old age

Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being render'd, I obey. ¹⁸⁶

Chief of the Ten. If you would have the
three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

Doge. Not eight hours, signor,
Nor even eight minutes—there's the
ducal ring ¹⁹⁰

[*Taking off his ring and cap.*]
And there the ducal diadem. And so
The Adriatic's free to wed another.

Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so
quickly.

Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst
you ¹⁹⁵

A face I know not.—Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT V

Mem. Signor, I am the son of Marco Memmo.
Doge. Ah! You father was my friend.—But *sons and fathers!*—
 What, ho! my servants there!
Atten. My prince!
Doge. No prince— 200
 There are the princes of the prince!
 [Pointing to the Ten's Deputation.]—
 Prepare
 To part from hence upon the instant.
Chief of the Ten. Why
 So rashly? 'twill give scandal.
Doge. Answer that;
 [To the Ten.
 It is your province.—Sirs, bestir yourselves:
 [To the Servants.
 There is one burthen which I beg you bear
 With care, although 'tis past all further
 harm— 206
 But I will look to that myself.
Bar. He means
 The body of his son.
Doge. And call Marina,
 My daughter!

Enter MARINA.
Doge. Get thee ready, we must mourn
 Elsewhere.
Mar. And everywhere.
Doge. True; but in freedom, 210
 Without these jealous spies upon the
 great.
 Signors, you may depart: what would you
 more?
 We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
 The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
 As *old* as I am, and I'm very old, 215
 Have served you, so have I, and I and they
 Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
 To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
 The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
 The Israelite and his Philistine foes. 220
 Such power I do believe there might exist
 In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
 As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good
 signors!
 May the next duke be better than the
 present!
Lor. The present duke is Paschal
 Malipiero. 225
Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of
 these doors.
Lor. St. Mark's great bell is soon
 about to toll
 For his inauguration.
Doge. Earth and heaven!
 Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
 Live to hear this!—the first Doge who e'er
 heard 230
 Such sound for his successor: happier he,
 My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero—
 This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor. Do you regret a traitor?
Doge. No—I merely
 Envy the dead.
Chief of the Ten. My lord, if you
 indeed 235
 Are bent upon this rash abandonment
 Of the state's palace, at the least retire
 By the private staircase, which conducts
 you towards
 The landing-place of the canal.
Doge. No. I
 Will now descend the stairs by which I
 mounted 240
 To sovereignty—the Giants' Stairs, on
 whose
 Broad eminence I was invested duke.
 My services have called me up those steps,
 The malice of my foes will drive me down
 them. 244
 There five and thirty years ago was I
 Install'd, and traversed these same halls,
 from which
 I never thought to be divorced except
 A corse—a corse, it might be, fighting for
 them—
 But not push'd hence by fellow-citizens.
 But come; my son and I will go together—
 He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.
Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?
Doge. I was publicly
 Elected, and so will I be deposed.
 Marina! art thou willing?
Mar. Here's my arm!
Doge. And here my staff: thus
 propp'd will I go forth. 255
Chief of the Ten. It must not be—the
 people will perceive it.
Doge. The people!—There's no
 people, you well know it,
 Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
 There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
 May shame you; but th-y dare not groan
 nor curse you, 260
 Save with their hearts and eyes.
Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion,
 Else—
Doge. You have reason. I have
 spoken much
 More than my wont: it is a foible which
 Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
 Inasmuch as it shows that I approach
 A dotage which may justify this deed
 Of yours, although the law does not, nor
 will. 267
 Farewell, sirs!
Bar. You shall not depart without
 An escort fitting past and present rank.
 We will accompany, with due respect,
 The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
 My brethren, will we not?
Different voices. Ay!—Ay!
Doge. You shall not
 Stir—in my train, at least. I enter'd here

As sovereign—I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen. 275
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.
Pomp is for princes—I am none!—That's

false,
I am, but only to these gates.—Ah!

Lor. Hark! 280
[The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.]

Bar. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which
tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognise
The sound! I heard it once, but once
before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even then I was not young.

Bar. Sit down, my lord! 285
You tremble.

Doge. 'Tis the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

Bar. I pray you sit.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a
throne till now.

Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily. 289

Doge [walks a few steps, then stops]. I
feel athirst—will no one bring me here
A cup of water?

Bar. I—

Mar. And I—

Lor. And I—

[The Doge takes a goblet from the hand
of LOREDANO.]

Doge. I take yours, Loredano, from
the hand

Most fit for such an hour as this.

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'Tis said that our Venetian
crystal has 294

Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.

You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and 300
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as look'd my

husband!

Bar. He sinks!—support him!—quick
—a chair—support him!

Doge. The bell tolls only—let's hence
—my brain's on fire!

Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!

Doge. No! 305

A sovereign should die standing. My poor
boy!

Off with your arms!—That bell!

[The DOGE drops down and dies.]

Mar. My God! My God!

Bar. [to Lor.]. Behold! your work's
completed!

Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!

Att. 'Tis all over.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his
obsequies 310

Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Breth-

ren,

Say, shall it not be so?

Bar. He has not had 315

The misery to die a subject where
He reign'd: then let his funeral rites be
princely.

Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?

All, except Lor., answer. Yes.

Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be
with him!

Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is
mockery.

Juggle no more with that poor remnant,
which, 320

A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your

empire,

And made your power as proud as was his
glory.)

You banish'd from his palace, and tore
down

From his high place, with such relentless
coldness; 325

And now, when he can neither know these
honours,

Nor would accept them if he could, you,
signors,

Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you

trampled.

A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour. 331

Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

Mar. I know it,

As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even

you,

Though (some, no doubt) consign'd to
powers which may 335

Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for

His dregs of life, which you have kindly
shorten'd:

It is my last of duties, and may prove
A dreary comfort in my desolation. 340

Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.

Chief of the Ten. Do you

Pretend still to this office?

Mar. I do, signor.

Though his possessions have been all con-
sumed

THE TWO FOSCARI

[ACT V. SCENE I

In the state's service, I have still my dowry, 345
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of—
[*She stops with agitation.*
Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.
Mar. Ay, they are fatherless, I thank you.
Chief of the Ten. We Cannot comply with your request. His relics 350
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and follow'd
Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.
Mar. I have heard of murderers, who have interr'd
Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
Of so much splendour in hypocrisy 355
O'er those they slew. I've heard of widows' tears—
Alas! I have shed some—always thanks to you!
I've heard of *heirs* in *sables*—you have left none

To the deceased, so you would act the part Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day, 360
I trust, Heaven's will be done too!
Chief of the Ten. Know you, lady, To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?
Mar. I know the former better than yourselves;
The latter—like yourselves; and can face both.
Wish you more funerals?
Bar. Heed not her rash words; 365
Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.
Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.
Bar. [*turning to Lor., who is writing upon his tablets.*] What art thou writing, With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?
Lor. [*pointing to the Doge's body.*] That he has paid me!
Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you?
Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and mine. 370
[*Curtain falls.*

CAIN

A MYSTERY

Now the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.—*Gen.* iii. 1.

TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

THE following scenes are entitled 'A Mystery', in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled 'Mysteries, or Moralities'. The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by 'the Serpent'; and that only because he was 'the most subtil of all the beasts of the field'. Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, 'Behold the Book!'—holding up the *Scripture*. It is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's 'Death of Abel' I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is Abel's Thirza; which occur in *Genesis*, may be traced to the same source, by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's 'Divine Legation'; whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to anything of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, &c., &c., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a 'tramelogedia' of Alfieri, called 'Abele'. I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his Life.

RAVENNA, Sept. 20, 1821.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN
ADAM
CAIN
ABEL

WOMEN
EVE
ADAH
ZILLAH

SPIRITS
ANGEL OF THE LORD
LUCIFER

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The Land without Paradise.—
Time, Sunrise.*

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH,
offering a Sacrifice.

Adam. God, the Eternal! Infinite!

All-wise!—

Who out of darkness on the deep didst
make

Light on the waters with a word—all hail!
Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day,
and separate

Morning from night, till then divided
never—

Who didst divide the wave from wave, and
call

Part of thy work the firmament—all hail!
Abel. God! who didst call the elements

into

Earth, ocean, air, and fire, and with the
day

And night, and worlds which these
illuminate,

Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee—all hail!

Adah. God, the Eternal! Parent of all

things!

Who didst create these best and beauteous
beings,

To be beloved, more than all, save thee—
Let me love thee and them:—All hail! all

hail!

Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making,
blessing all,

Yet didst permit the serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil:—Hail! all hail!

Adam. Son Cain, my first-born,
wherefore art thou silent? 22

Cain. Why should I speak?

Adam. To pray.

Cain. Have ye not pray'd?

Adam. We have, most fervently.

Cain. And loudly: I

Have heard you.

Adam. So will God, I trust.

Abel. Amen! 25

Adam. But thou, my eldest born, art
silent still.

Cain. 'Tis better I should be so.

Adam. Wherefore so?

Cain. I have nought to ask.

Adam. Nor aught to thank for!

Cain. No.

Adam. Dost thou not live?

Cain. Must I not die?

Eve. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins 30
To fall.

Adam. And we must gather it again.

Oh, God! why didst thou plant the tree of
knowledge?

Cain. And wherefore pluck'd ye not
the tree of life?

Ye might have then defied him.

Adam. Oh! my son,

Blaspheme not: these are serpent's words.

Cain. Why not? 35

The snake spoke *truth*; it was the tree of
knowledge;

It was the tree of life; knowledge is good,
And life is good; and how can both be evil?

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT I

Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke, in sin, 39

Before thy birth: let me not see renew'd My misery in thine. I have repented.

Let me not see my offspring fall into The snares beyond the walls of Paradise, Which e'en in Paradise destroy'd his parents.

Content thee with what is. Had we been so, 45

Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh, my son!

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,

Each to his task of toil—not heavy, though

Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly

Her fruits with little labour.

Eve. Cain, my son, 50
Behold thy father cheerful and resign'd,
And do as he doth.

[*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*
Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,

Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse

The Eternal anger?

Adah. My beloved Cain, 55
Wilt thou frown even on me?

Cain. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.

Abel. I'm sick at heart; but it will pass;
Precede me, brother—I will follow

shortly. 59
And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind:
Your gentleness must not be harshly met;

I'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother!

[*Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH.*
Cain [solus]. And this is

Life!—Toil! and wherefore should I toil?
—because 65

My father could not keep his place in Eden.

What had I done in this?—I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state

To which that birth has brought me. Why did he

Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this? 71

The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it

The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, 'Twas his

will, 75
And he is good.' How know I that? Be-

cause

He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?

I judge but by the fruits—and they are bitter—

Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here?—A shape like to the angels, 80

Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?

Why should I fear him more than other spirits,

Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,

In twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of those 86

Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls

And the immortal trees which overtop
The cherubim-defended battlements?

If I shrink not from these, the fire-arm'd angels, 91

Why should I quail from him who now approaches?

Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less

Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems 95

Half of his immortality. And is it
So? and can aught grieve save humanity?

He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain. Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer. Master of Spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou

Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts 100

Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!

You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all

Worthy of thought;—'tis your immortal

part

Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?

This has not been reveal'd: the tree of life

Was withheld from us by my father's

folly, 106

While that of knowledge, by my mother's

haste,

Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit is

death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee;

thou shalt live.

Cain. I live,

But live to die; and, living, see no thing

To make death hateful, save an innate

clinging, 111

A loathsome, and yet all invincible

Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I

Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—

And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer. Thou livest, and must live
for ever; think not 116
The earth, which is thine outward
cov'ring, is
Existence—it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

Cain. No less! and why
No more?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we.

Cain. And ye?

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye happy? 121

Lucifer. We are mighty.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. No: art thou?

Cain. How should I be so? Look on
me!

Lucifer. Poor clay!
And thou pretendest to be wretched!

Thou!

Cain. I am:—and thou, with all thy
might, what art thou? 125

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what
made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain. Ah!

Thou look'st almost a god; and—

Lucifer. I am none:
And having fail'd to be one, would be
nought

Save what I am. He conquer'd; let him
reign! 130

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. Thy sire's Maker, and the
earth's.

Cain. And heaven's,
And all that in them is. So I have heard
His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say—what they must
sing and say, on pain 134

Of being that which I am—and thou art—
Of spirits and of men.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their im-
mortality—

Souls who dare look the Omnipotent
tyrant in

His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good! If he has made, 140
As he saith—which I know not, nor
believe—

But, if he made us—he cannot unmake:
We are immortal! nay, he'd have us so,
That he may torture:—let him! He is
great—

But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict: Goodness would not
make 146

Evil; and what else hath he made? But
let him

Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense
existence 150

And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;
Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best
boon

He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery! 156

Spirits and Men, at least we sympathise—
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable more endurable,

By the unbounded sympathy of all 160
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his
height,

So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create—

Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things
which long have swum

In visions through my thought: I never
could 165

Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me

Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise

Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,
Which shut them out and me: I feel the
weight 171

Of daily toil, and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing,

with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things—but I thought
alone 175

This misery was *mine*. My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the
mind

Which made her thirst for knowledge at
the risk

Of an eternal curse; my brother is 179
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids

The earth yield nothing to us without
sweat;

My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my Adah, my
Own and beloved, she, too, understands
not 185

The mind which overwhelms me: never till
Now met I aught to sympathise with me.

'Tis well—I rather would consort with
spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit
by thine own soul

For such companionship, I would not
now 190

Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.

Cain. Ah! didst thou tempt my
mother?

Lucifer. I tempt none,
Save with the truth: was not the tree the
tree

Of knowledge? and was not the tree of life
Still fruitful? Did I bid her pluck them
not? 196

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT I

Did I plant things prohibited within
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have
made ye

Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so
thrust ye 200

Because 'ye should not eat the fruits of
life,
And become gods as we.' Were those his
words?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from
those who heard them,
In thunder.

Lucifer. Then who was the demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who
would 205

Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of knowledge?

Cain. Would they had snatch'd both
The fruits, or neither!

Lucifer. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

Cain. How so?

Lucifer. By being
Yourself, in your resistance. Nothing
can 210

Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things—'tis
made

To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my
parents?

Lucifer. I?
Poor clay! what should I tempt them for,
or how?

Cain. They say the serpent was a
spirit. 215

Lucifer. Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high:
The proud One will not so far falsify,
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual
nature

His own low failing. The snake was the
snake— 220

No more; and yet not less than those he
tempted,

In nature being earth also—*more* in
wisdom,

Since he could overcome them, and fore-
knew

The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things
that die? 225

Cain. But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forked tongue.
I tell thee that the serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thou-
sand ages 230

Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes, and
your seed's,

The seed of the then world may thus array

Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him, who made things but to
bend 235

Before his sullen, sole eternity;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it.

Thy
Fond parents listen'd to a creeping thing,
And fell. For what should spirits tempt
them? What

Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade 241
Space—but I speak to thee of what
thou know'st not,

With all thy tree of knowledge.

Cain. But thou canst not
Speak aught of knowledge which I would
not know,

And do not thirst to know, and bear a
mind 245

To know.

Lucifer. And heart to look on?

Cain. Be it proved.

Lucifer. Darest thou look on Death?
Cain. He has not yet

Been seen.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Cain. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my
mother

Weeps when he's named; and Abel lifts
his eyes 250

To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the
earth,

And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on
me,

And speaks not.

Lucifer. And thou?

Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I
hear 254

Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?

I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape; but will
absorb all things

That bear the form of earth-born being.
Cain. Ah! 260

I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. The Maker—call him
Which name thou wilt: he makes but to
destroy.

Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it,
since I heard 265

Of Death: although I know not what it is,
Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd out

In the vast desolate night in search of him;
And when I saw gigantic shadows in

The umbrage of the walls of Eden,
chequer'd 270

By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watch'd for what I thought his coming:
for

With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 'twas which shook us all—but
nothing came. 274

And then I turn'd my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too,
die?

Lucifer. Perhaps—but long outlive
both thine and thee.

Cain. I'm glad of that: I would not
have them die— 280

They are so lovely. What is death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 'tis denounced against
us,

Both them who sinn'd and sinn'd not, as
an ill— 284

What ill?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

Cain. Were I quiet earth,
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to
know. 290

Cain. But not to live, or wherefore
pluck'd he not

The life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hinder'd.

Cain. Deadly error!

Not to snatch first that fruit:—but ere he
pluck'd

The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is, 295
And yet I fear it—fear I know not what!

Lucifer. And I, who know all things,
fear nothing; see

What is true knowledge.

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Ay, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.

Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me—
thy Lord. 300

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father
worships.

Lucifer. No.

Cain. His equal?

Lucifer. No;—I have nought
in common with him!

Nor would: I would be aught above—
beneath—

Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great:—
Many there are who worship me, and
more 306

Who shall—be thou amongst the first.

Cain.

I never

As yet have bow'd unto my father's God,
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice:—
Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bow'd 311
To him?

Cain. Have I not said it?—need I say
it?

Could not thy mighty knowledge teach
thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has
bow'd to me.

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'er the less, 315
Thou art my worshipper; not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Thou'lt know here—and
hereafter.

Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer. Follow

Where I will lead thee.

Cain. But I must retire 320

till the earth—for I had promised—

Lucifer. What?

Cain. To cull some first-fruits.

Lucifer. Why?

Cain. To offer up

With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Said'st thou not

Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made
thee?

Cain. Yes—

But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought
upon me. 325

The offering is more his than mine—and
Adah—

Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate?

Cain. She is my sister,

Born on the same day, of the same womb;
and

She wrung from me, with tears, this
promise; and

Rather than see her weep, I would, me-
thinks, 330

Bear all—and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me!

Cain. I will.

Enter ADAH.

Adah. My brother, I have come for
thee;

It is our hour of rest and joy—and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast

labour'd not

This morn; but I have done thy task: the
fruits 335

Are ripe, and glowing as the light which
ripens:

Come away.

Cain. Seest thou not?

Adah. I see an angel;

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT I

We have seen many: will he share our
hour
Of rest?—he is welcome.
Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.
Adah. Are there, then, others? 340
But he is welcome, as they were: they
deign'd
To be our guests—will he?
Cain [to Lucifer]. Wilt thou?
Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.
Cain. I must away with him.
Adah. And leave us?
Cain. Ay.
Adah. And me?
Cain. Beloved Adah!
Adah. Let me go with thee.
Lucifer. No, she must not.
Adah. Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and
heart? 346
Cain. He is a god.
Adah. How know'st thou?
Cain. He speaks like
A god.
Adah. So did the serpent, and it lied.
Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah!—was not
the tree that 349
Of knowledge?
Adah. Ay—to our eternal sorrow.
Lucifer. And yet that grief is know-
ledge—so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 'twas with truth;
And truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.
Adah. But all we know of it has
gather'd
Evil on ill; expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness; 356
Remorse of that which was—and hope of
that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with
this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love
me—I
Love thee.
Lucifer. More than thy mother, and
thy sire? 360
Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?
Lucifer. No, not yet;
It one day will be in your children.
Adah. What!
Must not my daughter love her brother
Enoch?
Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.
Adah. Oh, my God!
Shall they not love and bring forth things
that love 365
Out of their love? have they not drawn
their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their
father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same
hour
With me? did we not love each other? and
In multiplying our being multiply 370
Things which will love each other as we
love
Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go
not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.
Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of
my making,
And cannot be a sin in you—what'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.
Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves
Of—
Lucifer. Higher things than ye are
slaves: and higher 380
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking
prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love, 386
But terror and self-hope.
Adah. Omnipotence
Must be all goodness.
Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?
Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with
beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.
Lucifer. As true. 390
Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the
knowledge
Of good and evil?
Adah. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine off-
spring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast
pass'd
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent 395
And happy intercourse with happy spirits:
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God, and tempt us with our
own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as
thou 400
Wert work'd on by the snake, in thy most
flush'd
And heedless, harmless wantonness of
bliss.
I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me; I cannot abhor
him; 404
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him: in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart
Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws
me near,

CAIN: A MYSTERY

Nearer and nearer:—Cain—Cain—save
me from him! 410

Cain. What dreads my Adah? This
is no ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God—nor God's: I
have beheld

The cherubs and the seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier
still—

The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the
archangels. 415

Adah. Ay—but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery—no.

Adah. I have heard it said,

The seraphs love most—cherubim know
most—

And this should be a cherub—since he
loves not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge
quenches love, 420

What must he be you cannot love when
known?

Since the all-knowing cherubim love
least,

The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom

Of thy fond parents, for their daring,
proves. 425

Choose betwixt love and knowledge—
since there is

No other choice: your sire hath chosen
already:

His worship is but fear.

Adah. Oh, Cain! choose love.

Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose
not—it was

Born with me—but I love nought else.

Adah. Our parents?

Cain. Did they love us when they
snatch'd from the tree 430

That which hath driven us all from
Paradise?

Adah. We were not born then—and
if we had been,

Should we not love them and our children,
Cain?

Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping
sister!

Could I but deem them happy, I would
half 435

Forget—but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations!

never

Shall men love the remembrance of the
man

Who sow'd the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour! They pluck'd the tree

of science 440

And sin—and, not content with their own
sorrow,

Begot me—thee—and all the few that are,

And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may
be,

To inherit agonies accumulated 445

By ages!—and I must be sire of such
things!

Thy beauty and thy love—my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid

hour,

All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many

years 450

Of sin and pain—or few, but still of
sorrow,

Intercheck'd with an instant of brief
pleasure,

To Death—the unknown! Methinks the
tree of knowledge

Hath not fulfill'd its promise:—if they
sinn'd,

At least they ought to have known all
things that are 455

Of knowledge—and the mystery of death.
What do they know?—that they are

miserable.

What need of snakes and fruits to teach us
that?

Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if
thou

Wert happy—

Cain. Be thou happy, then,
alone— 460

I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.

Adah. Alone I could not,
Nor would be happy; but with those

around us

I think I could be so, despite of death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, 465

though

It seems an awful shadow—if I may
Judge from what I have heard.

Lucifer. And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy?

Adah. Alone! Oh, my God!
Who could be happy and alone, or good?

To me my solitude seems sin; unless 470

When I think how soon I shall see my
brother,

His brother, and our children, and our
parents.

Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is
he happy,

Lonely, and good?

Adah. He is not so; he hath 474

The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy.

What else can joy be, but the spreading
joy?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile
fresh from Eden;

Or of his first-born son: ask your own
heart;

It is not tranquil.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

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Adah. Alas! no! and you— 480
Are you of heaven?

Lucifer. If I am not, inquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and
good 483

Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
And some of us resist, and both in vain,
His seraphs say: but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without: there is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the
morn.

Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for
its beauty.

Lucifer. And why not adore?

Adah. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer. But the symbols 495
Of the Invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible; and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of heaven.

Adah. Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer. Hast thou seen him? 500

Adah. Yes—in his works.

Lucifer. But in his being?

Adah. No—

Save in my father, who is God's own
image;

Or in his angels, who are like to thee—
And brighter, yet less beautiful and
powerful 504

In seeming: as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us; but thou
seem'st

Like an ethereal night, where long white
clouds

Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd
stars

Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be
suns; 510

So beautiful, unnumber'd, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost
thou.

Thou seem'st unhappy: do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.

Lucifer. Alas! those tears! 515
Couldst thou but know what oceans will
be shed—

Adah. By me?

Lucifer. By all.

Adah. What all?

Lucifer. The million millions—
The myriad myriads—the all-peopled
earth—

The unpeopled earth—and the o'er-
peopled hell,

Of which thy bosom is the germ.

Adah. O Cain! 520

This spirit curseth us.

Cain. Let him say on;

Him will I follow.

Adah. Whither?

Lucifer. To a place
Whence he shall come back to thee in an
hour;

But in that hour see things of many days.

Adah. How can that be? 524

Lucifer. Did not your Maker make
Out of old worlds this new one in few days?
And cannot I, who aided in this work,
Show in an hour what he hath made in
many,

Or hath destroy'd in few?

Cain. Lead on.

Adah. Will he,

In sooth, return within an hour?

Lucifer. He shall. 530

With us acts are exempt from time, and we

Can crowd eternity into an hour,

Or stretch an hour into eternity:

We breathe not by a mortal measure-
ment—

But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with
me. 535

Adah. Will he return?

Lucifer. Ay, woman! he alone

Of mortals from that place (the first and
last

Who shall return, save ONE), shall come
back to thee,

To make that silent and expectant world
As populous as this: at present there 540
Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where
should I dwell? Where are

Thy God or Gods—there am I: all things
are

Divided with me: life and death—and
time—

Eternity—and heaven and earth—and
that 545

Which is not heaven nor earth, but
peopled with

Those who once peopled or shall people
both—

These are my realms! So that I do divide
His, and possess a kingdom which is not

His. If I were not that which I have
said, 550

Could I stand here? His angels are within
Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair
serpent

Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard.

If thou dost long for knowledge, I can
satisfy

That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of
fruits 555

Which shall deprive thee of a single good
The conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

Cain. Spirit, I have said it.

[*Exeunt LUCIFER and CAIN.*]

Adah [follows exclaiming]. *Cain!* my brother! *Cain!*

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Abyss of Space.*

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not; yet
I fear

To sink.

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou
shalt be

Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety?

Lucifer. Believe—and sink not!
doubt—and perish! thus

Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their
shallow senses,

Worship the word which strikes their ear,
and deem

Evil or good what is proclaim'd to them
In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of my dooming. There will
come

An hour, when, toss'd upon some water-
drops,

A man shall say to a man, 'Believe in me,
And walk the waters;' and the man shall
walk

The billows and be safe. I will not say,
Believe in me, as a conditional creed
To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar'st not deny,—the history
Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh, god, or demon, or whate'er
thou art,

Is yon our earth?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise
The dust which form'd your father?

Cain. Can it be?
Yon small blue circle, swinging in far
ether,

With an inferior circlet near it still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly
night?

Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them?

Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and
smaller,

And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light

Which shone the roundest of the stars,
when I

Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from
them,

Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited
By greater things, and they themselves far
more

In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living, and all doom'd to death, and
wretched,

What wouldst thou think?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were
Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such
things,

And science still beyond them, were
chain'd down

To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoom'd to be
As frail, and few so happy—

Cain. Spirit! I
Know nought of death, save as a dreadful
thing

Of which I have heard my parents speak,
as of

A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life; a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die,
Methinks is merely propagating death,
And multiplying murder.

Lucifer. Thou canst not
All die—there is what must survive.

Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with
death

Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be
as I am?

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see
thy power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond
my power,

Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT II

Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay?

Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality—and yet 87
Seem'st sorrowful?

Lucifer. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal?

Cain. Thou hast said, I must be 90
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately—but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came
upon thee.

Cain. How? 95

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal?

Lucifer. We and thy sons will try.

But now, behold!

Is it not glorious?

Cain. Oh, thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased 100
And still increasing lights! what are ye?
what

Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of
Eden? 104

Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aerial universe of endless
Expansion—at which my soul aches to
think—

Intoxicated with eternity? 109

Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die
(If that they die), or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in
this hour 115

Unworthy what I see, though my dust is;
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look
back to thine earth!

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there! 120

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. That!—yonder!

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?
Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-
worms

Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green
banks

In the dim twilight, brighter than yon
world 125

Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms
and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling—what dost
think of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their
own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both
beautiful,

The little shining fire-fly in its flight, 130
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?

Cain. How know I what
I dare behold? As yet, thou hast shown
nought

I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me. 135
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or
immortal?

Cain. Why, what are things?

Lucifer. Both partly: but what doth
Sit next thy heart?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall—the mysteries of death.

Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things
which have died, 141

As I have shown thee much which cannot
die?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty
wings.

Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue!
The stars fade from us!

The earth! where is my earth? Let me
look on it, 145

For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'Tis now beyond thee,
Less, in the universe, than thou in it;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it;
thou

Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust:
'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine. 150

Cain. Where dost thou lead me?

Lucifer. To what was before thee!
The phantasm of the world; of which thy
world

Is but the wreck.

Cain. What! is it not then new?

Lucifer. No more than life is; and that
was ere thou 154

Or I were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either: many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend
to have

Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been
extinct

To make way for much meaner than we
can 160

SCENE I]

Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.
But changes make not death, except to
clay;

But thou art clay—and canst but com-
prehend

That which was clay, and such thou shalt
behold. 165

Cain. Clay, spirit! what thou wilt, I
can survey.

Lucifer. Away, then!

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we
approach'd,

And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.

Cain. And Edens in them?

Lucifer. It may be.

Cain. And men? 170

Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.

Cain. Ay? and serpents too?

Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men with-
out them? must no reptiles
Breathe, save the erect ones?

Cain. How the lights recede!
Where fly we?

Lucifer. To the world of phantoms,
which 174
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.

Cain. But it grows dark, and dark—
the stars are gone!

Lucifer. And yet thou seest.

Cain. 'Tis a fearful light!
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.

The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight, yet I see 180

Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with
light,

Seem'd full of life even when their
atmosphere

Of light gave way, and show'd them taking
shapes

Unequal, of deep valleys and vast moun-
tains; 185

And some emitting sparks, and some dis-
playing

Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons,

which took,
Like them, the features of fair earth;—

instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.

Lucifer. But distinct.
Thou seekest to behold death, and dead
things? 191

Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there
are

Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and
me,

And all that we inherit, liable
To such, that we behold at once, what I

Must one day see perform. Behold!

Lucifer.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

Cain. 'Tis darkness. 196

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever; but
we will

Unfold its gates!

Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart—what's this?

Lucifer. Enter!

Cain. Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else
should death be peopled? 200

Its present realm is thin to what it will be
Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide
And wider, and make widening circles
round us.

Lucifer. Advance!

Cain. And thou!

Lucifer. Fear not—without me thou
Couldst not have gone beyond thy world.

On! on! 205
[*They disappear through the clouds.*]

SCENE II.—Hades.

Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are
these dim worlds!

For they seem more than one, and yet
more peopled

Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs
which swung

So thickly in the upper air, that I
Had deem'd them rather the bright
populace 5

Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
Than things to be inhabited themselves,

But that on drawing near them I beheld
Their swelling into palpable immensity

Of matter, which seem'd made for life to
dwell on, 10

Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy, and so full of twilight, that

It speaks of a day past.

Lucifer. It is the realm
Of death.—Wouldst have it present? 14

Cain. Till I know 14
That which it really is, I cannot answer.

But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a thing—

Oh God! I dare not think on't! Cursed be
He who invented life that leads to death!

Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it—

Even for the innocent!

Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?
Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me
my birth?

Cursed he not me before my birth, in
daring

To pluck the fruit forbidden?
Lucifer. Thou say'st well: 25

The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and
thee—

But for thy sons and brother?

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT II

Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What
else is

Bequeath'd to me? I leave them my
inheritance.

Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms 30
Of swimming shadows and enormous
shapes,

Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy—what are ye?

Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.

Cain. Then what is death?

Lucifer. What! Hath not he who
made ye 35

Said 'tis another life?

Cain. Till now he hath

Said nothing, save that all shall die.

Lucifer. Perhaps

He one day will unfold that further secret.

Cain. Happy the day!

Lucifer. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and
clogg'd 40

With agonies eternal, to innumerable

Yet unborn myriads of unconscious
atoms,

All to be animated for this only!

Cain. What are these mighty

phantoms which I see
Floating around me?—They wear not the
form 45

Of the intelligences I have seen

Round our regretted and unenter'd Eden,

Nor wear the form of man as I have view'd
it

In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my
children's: 50

And yet they have an aspect, which,
though not

Of men nor angels, looks like something
which,

If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and
full

Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape; for I never saw such. They bear
not 56

The wing of seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught
that is

Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which

Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.

Lucifer. Yet they lived.

Cain. Where?

Lucifer. Where

Thou livest.

Cain. When?

Lucifer. On what thou callest earth

They did inhabit.

Cain. Adam is the first.

Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee—but too
mean to be 65

The last of these.

Cain. And what are they?

Lucifer. That which

Thou shalt be.

Cain. But what were they?

Lucifer. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious
things,

As much superior unto all thy sire, 69
Adam, could e'er have been in Eden, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,

In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son;—and how weak they
are, judge

By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me! and did they perish?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou
wilt fade from thine. 75

Cain. But was mine theirs?

Lucifer. It was.

Cain. But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall?

Lucifer. Ask him who fells.

Cain. But how?

Lucifer. By a most crushing and
inexorable 80

Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos

Subsiding has struck out a world: such
things,

Though rare in time, are frequent in
eternity.—

Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'Tis awful! 85

Lucifer. And true. Behold these
phantoms! they were once

Material as thou art.

Cain. And must I be

Like them?

Lucifer. Let Him who made thee
answer that.

I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they were thou feeblest, in degree

Inferior as thy petty feelings and 91
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part

Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they
had

Is life, and what ye shall have—death: the
rest 95

Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engender'd out of the subsiding

Slime of a mighty universe, crush'd into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with

Things whose enjoyment was to be in
blindness— 100

A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barr'd as poison. But
behold

What these superior beings are or were;
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task—I'll waft thee there
in safety. 105

Cain. No: I'll stay here.

Lucifer. How long?

Cain. For ever! Since
I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me—let me dwell in
shadows.

Lucifer. It cannot be: thou now
beholdest as 110

A vision that which is reality.

To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou
see'st have pass'd—

The gates of death.

Cain. By what gate have we enter'd
Even now?

Lucifer. By mine! But, plighted to
return, 115

My spirit buoys thee up to bathe in
regions

Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze
on;

But do not think to dwell here till thine
hour

Is come.

Cain. And these, too; can they ne'er
repass

To earth again?

Lucifer. Their earth is gone for ever—
So changed by its convulsion, they would
not 121

Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely harden'd surface—

'twas—

Oh, what a beautiful world it was!

Cain. And is.

It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war, but that I may not profit 126

By what it bears of beautiful, untailing,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts

With knowledge, nor allay my thousand
fears

Of death and life.

Lucifer. What thy world is thou see'st,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence 133

(At least so seeming) to the things we have
pass'd,

Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest
which 136

Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror; taller than

The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which
fence them, 140

And tusks projecting like the trees stripp'd
of

Their bark and branches—what were they?

Lucifer. That which
The Mammoth is in thy world;—but
these lie

By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But
None on it?

Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it
useless— 146

'Twould be destroy'd so early.

Cain. But why war?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the
denunciation

Which drove your race from Eden—war
with all things,

And death to all things, and disease to
most things, 150

And pangs, and bitterness; these were the
fruits

Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals—
Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, they
were made for you,

As you for him.—You would not have
their doom 155

Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas! the hopeless wretches!
They too must share my sire's fate, like
his sons;

Like them, too, without having shared the
apple;

Like them, too, without the so dear-
bought knowledge! 160

It was a lying tree—for we know nothing.
At least it promised knowledge at the price

Of death—but knowledge still: but what
knows man?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the
highest knowledge;

And being of all things the sole thing
certain, 165

At least leads to the surest science: there-
fore

The tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms!
I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly—but 'tis some-
thing 170

To know there are such realms.

Cain. We knew already

That there was death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine
own—

And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT II

Lucifer. Be content; it will 176
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space

Of glorious azure, which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I
should deem 180

The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bank-
less

And boundless, and of an ethereal hue—
What is it?

Lucifer. There is still some such on
earth,

Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it—'tis the phantasm of an
ocean. 186

Cain. 'Tis like another world; a liquid
sun—

And those inordinate creatures sporting
o'er
Its shining surface?

Lucifer. Are its inhabitants,
The past leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane
and vasty 191

Head ten times higher than the haughtiest
cedar

Forth from the abyss, looking as he could
coil

Himself around the orbs we lately look'd

Is he not of the kind which bask'd beneath
The tree in Eden?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best 196
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No
doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least
so call'd), 200

But never that precisely which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not?

Cain. No: 'twas my mother
Who tempted him—she tempted by the
serpent.

Lucifer. Good man! where'er thy wife,
or thy sons' wives, 205

Tempt thee or them to aught that's new
or strange,

Be sure thou see'st first who hath tempted
them.

Cain. Thy precept comes too late:
there is no more

For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may
tempt man to, 210

And man tempt woman:—let thy sons
look to it!

My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even

Given chiefly at my own expense; 'tis true,
'Twill not be follow'd, so there's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou!—
Thy world and thou are still too young!

Thou thinkest 216
Thyself most wicked and unhappy: is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime, I know not; but for
pain,

I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin, and thou art evil—
Of sorrow, and thou sufferest—are both

Eden 221
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state

again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating

In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do.—
Now let us back to earth!

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for know-
ledge?

Cain. Yes; as being 230
The road to happiness.

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not
planting it.

But ignorance of evil doth not save 235
From evil; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No:
I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good.

Lucifer. And who and what doth not?
Who covets evil

For its own bitter sake?—None—nothing!
'tis 240

The heaven of all life, and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs
which we beheld,

Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom

realm,
Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from
afar.

Cain. And what of that? 246
Distance can but diminish glory—they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth
most beautiful,

And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this—
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest
nearest. 251

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion.
—What is that

Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things re-
mote?

Cain. My sister Adah.—All the stars
of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world—
The hues of twilight—the sun's gorgeous
coming—

His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly
with him 261

Along that western paradise of clouds,
The forest shade, the green bough, the
bird's voice—

The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of
love,

And mingles with the song of cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls:—
All these are nothing, to my eyes and
heart, 267

Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and
heaven

To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young
creation, 270

And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her
brother.

Lucifer. Mortal!
My brotherhood's with those who have
no children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellow-
ship with us. 275

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall
be for me.

But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,

Why art thou wretched?

Cain. Why do I exist?
Why art thou wretched? why are all things
so? 280

Even he who made us must be, as the
maker

Of things unhappy! To produce destruc-
tion

Can surely never be the task of joy,
And yet my sire says he's omnipotent:

Then why is evil—he being good? I ask'd
This question of my father; and he said,

Because this evil only was the path 287
To good. Strange good, that must arise
from out

Its deadly opposite! I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor
suckling 290

Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the
vain

And piteous bleating of its restless dam;
My father pluck'd some herbs, and laid
them to

The wound; and by degrees the helpless
wretch

Resumed its careless life, and rose to
drain 295

The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.

Behold, my son! said Adam, how from
evil

Springs good!

Lucifer. What didst thou answer?
Cain. Nothing; for

He is my father: but I thought, that 'twere
A better portion for the animal 301

Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life

With agonies unutterable, though
Dispell'd by antidotes.

Lucifer. But as thou saidst
Of all beloved things thou lovest her 306

Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth
hers

Unto thy children—

Cain. Most assuredly:
What should I be without her?

Lucifer. What am I?
Cain. Dost thou love nothing?

Lucifer. What does thy God love?
Cain. All things, my father says; but
I confess 311

I see it not in their allotment here.

Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst
not see if I love

Or no, except some vast and general
purpose,

To which particular things must melt like
snows. 315

Cain. Snows! what are they?
Lucifer. Be happier in not knowing

What thy remoter offspring must en-
counter;

But bask beneath the clime which knows
no winter.

Cain. But dost thou not love some-
thing like thyself? 319

Lucifer. And dost thou love thyself?
Cain. Yes, but love more

What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it.

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 'tis
beautiful,

As was the apple in thy mother's eye;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love

Will cease, like any other appetite. 326
Cain. Cease to be beautiful! how can
that be?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But time has pass'd, and
hitherto

Even Adam and my mother both are fair:
Not fair like Adah and the seraphim—

But very fair.
Lucifer. All that must pass away 331

In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it; but

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT II

Cannot conceive my love for her the less:
And when her beauty disappears, me-
thinks 334

He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what
must perish.

Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother—
Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well—
so does thy God. 340

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'Tis well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly!

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.

Cain. Let him keep
Her favour, since the serpent was the first
To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
To me? should I not love that which all
love? 346

Lucifer. And the Jehovah—the indul-
gent Lord,
And bounteous planter of barr'd Para-
dise—

He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain. I
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.

Cain. Rarely.

Lucifer. But 351
Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to
me of this?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of
this ere now.

Cain. And if 355
I have thought, why recall a thought
that—[he pauses, as agitated]—Spirit!
Here we are in thy world; speak not of
mine.

Thou hast shown me wonders: thou hast
shown me those

Mighty pre-Adamites who walk'd the
earth

Of which ours is the wreck: thou hast
pointed out 360

Myriads of starry worlds, of which our
own

Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life: thou hast shown me
shadows

Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us—Death; thou
hast shown me much— 365

But not all: show me where Jehovah
dwells,

In his especial Paradise—or thine:
Where is it?

Lucifer. Here, and o'er all space.

Cain. But ye
Have some allotted dwelling—as all
things;

Clay has its earth, and other worlds their
tenants; 370

All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe our breath, have
theirs, thou say'st;

And the Jehovah and thyself have thine—
Ye do not dwell together?

Lucifer. No, we reign 375
Together; but our dwellings are asunder.

Cain. Would there were only one of
ye! perchance

An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarr'd in
storms.

How came ye, being spirits, wise and
infinite, 380

To separate? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence, and your nature, and your
glory?

Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother?

Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain; but were it not so,
Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out?

Infinity with Immortality? 386

Jarring and turning space to misery—
For what?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal?

Lucifer. Yea!

Cain. And what I have seen,
Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

Lucifer. Ay.
Cain. And cannot ye both reign,
then?—is there not 391

Enough?—why should ye differ?

Lucifer. We both reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which?

Cain. Thou! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou
not?

Lucifer. And why not he who made?
I made ye not; 395

Ye are his creatures, and not mine.

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or
show me

Thy dwelling, or his dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee
Both; but the time will come thou shalt
see one

Of them for evermore.

Cain. And why not now?

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath
scarcely grasp to gather 401

The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought; and thou wouldst go
on aspiring

SCENE II]

CAIN: A MYSTERY

To the great double mysteries! the two
Principles!

And gaze upon them on their secret
thrones! 405

Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There
The son of her who snatch'd the apple
spake!

But thou wouldst only perish, and not see
them; 410

That sight is for the other state.
Cain. Of death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something
definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee
to thy world,

Where thou shalt multiply the race of
Adam, 415

Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep,
sleep, and die.

Cain. And to what end have I beheld
these things

Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I
show'd,

Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem

Nothing.

Lucifer. And this should be the human
sum 421

Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's
nothingness;

Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'Twill spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit!

Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself,
though proud, 425

Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No! by heaven, which He
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him
—No!

I have a victor—true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all—but none from
me: 430

I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,

And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages, 435

All, all, will I dispute! And world by
world,

And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be
quenched! 440

And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate?

He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd
Evil; but what will be the good he gives?

Were I the victor, his works would be
deem'd 445

The only evil ones. And you, ye new
And scarce born mortals, what have been
his gifts

To you already, in your little world?

Cain. But few; and some of those but
bitter.

Lucifer. Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the
rest 450

Of his celestial boons to you and yours.
Evil and good are things in their own

essence,

And not made good or evil by the giver;
But if he gives you good—so call him; if

Evil springs from him, do not name it mine,
Till ye know better its true fount; and

judge 456

Not by words, though of spirits, but the
fruits

Of your existence, such as it must be.
One good gift has the fatal apple given—

Your reason:—let it not be over-sway'd
By tyrannous threats to force you into

faith 461

'Gainst all external sense and inward
feeling:

Think and endure,—and form an inner
world

In your own bosom—where the outward
fails;

So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your
own. 466

[They disappear.]

ACT III

SCENE I.—The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah. Hush, tread softly, Cain.

Cain. I will; but wherefore?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon
yon bed

Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain. Cypress! 'tis
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it
mourn'd

O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst
thou choose it 5

For our child's canopy?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore
seem'd

Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Ay, the last—
And longest; but no matter—lead me to
him.

[They go up to the child.]
How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,

In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT III

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now; he will awake
soon. 14

His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'Tis closed.

Cain. You have said well; I will
contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and
sleeps!—Sleep on,
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and
smile! 20

Thine are the hours and days when both
are cheering
And innocent! *thou* hast not pluck'd the
fruit—

Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must
the time

Come thou shalt be amerced for sins
unknown,

Which were not thine nor mine? But now
sleep on! 25

His cheeks are reddening into deeper
smiles,

And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves
o'er them;

Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He
must dream— 30

Of what? Of Paradise!—Ay! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor
fathers,

Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!
Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not
whisper o'er our son 35

Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
Can we not make another?

Cain.

Where?

Adah.

Here, or

Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I
feel not

The want of this so much regretted Eden.
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and
brother, 41

And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our
birth?

Cain. Yes—death, too, is amongst the
debts we owe her.

Adah. Cain! that proud spirit, who
withdrew thee hence, 45

Hath sadden'd thine still deeper. I had
hoped

The promised wonders which thou hast
beheld,

Visions, thou say'st, of past and present
worlds,

Would have composed thy mind into the
calm

Of a contented knowledge; but I see 50
Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank
him,

And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain.

So soon?

Adah.

'Tis scarcely

Two hours since ye departed: two long
hours

To me, but only *hours* upon the sun. 55
Cain. And yet I have approach'd that
sun, and seen

Worlds which he once shone on, and never
more

Shall light; and worlds he never lit: me-
thought

Years had roll'd o'er my absence.

Adah.

Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of
time, 60

And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.

I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguish'd
worlds;

And, gazing on eternity, methought 65
I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity: but now I feel

My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
That I was nothing!

Adah.

Wherefore said he so?

Jehovah said not that.

Cain.

No: he contents him 70

With making us the *nothing* which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves

It back to dust again—for what?

Adah.

Thou know'st—

Even for our parents' error.

Cain.

What is that 75

To us? they sinn'd, then *let them* die!
Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor
is that thought

Thy own, but of the spirit who was with
thee.

Would I could die for them, so *they* might
live!

Cain.

Why, so say I—provided that
one victim 80

Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there

Might never taste of death nor human
sorrow,

Nor hand it down to those who spring
from him.

Adah.

How know we that some such
atonement one day 85

May not redeem our race?

Cain.

By sacrificing

The harmless for the guilty? what atone-
ment

Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what
have we

Done, that we must be victims for a deed

Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin—
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my

Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here? 95

Adah. Two altars, which our brother
Abel made

During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would
be so ready

With the burnt offerings, which he daily
brings 100

With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a
bribe

To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no
offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth, the
early, beautiful 105

Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers
and fruits;

These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and
sweaten in the sun,

According to the curse:—must *I* do more?
For what should *I* be gentle? for a war

With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must *I* be
grateful?

For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till *I* return to dust? If *I* am nothing—

For nothing shall *I* be an hypocrite, 116
And seem well-pleased with pain? For
what should *I*

Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by 120

The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper,
there,

The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 'twere
I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd him
'gainst 125

The rocks, than let him live to—

Adah. Oh, my God!
Touch not the child—my child! *thy* child!

Oh, *Cain*!

Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and
all the power

Which sways them, *I* would not accost
yon infant 129

With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy
speech?

Cain.

I said,

'Twere better that he ceased to live, than
give

Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but
since 134

That saying jars you, let us only say—
'Twere better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were
then the joys,

The mother's joys of watching, nourish-
ing,

And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet
Enoch! [*She goes to the child.*]

Oh, *Cain*! look on him; see how full of
life, 140

Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of
joy,

How like to me—how like to thee, when
gentle,

For *then* we are *all* alike; is't not so, *Cain*?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are 145

In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*,
and

When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my
Cain!

And love thyself for our sakes, for we love
thee.

Look! how he laughs and stretches out
his arms, 149

And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of
pain!

The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him,
Cain!

As yet he hath no words to thank thee,
but 155

His heart will, and thine own too.

Cain. Bless thee, boy!
If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!

Adah. It shall.
Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain. Of that *I* doubt; 160
But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.
Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, *Cain*! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast
been wandering,

In high communion with a spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of
those 166

We have seen and spoken with, like to our
father?

Cain. No.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT III

Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so—if so you
term him? 170

Abel. Term him! your words are
strange to-day, my brother.
My sister Adah, leave us for awhile—
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft
spirit, 174

And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[Exit ADAH, with her child.

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

Cain. The dead,
The immortal, the unbounded, the
omnipotent,

The overpowering mysteries of space—
The innumerable worlds that were and
are— 180

A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-
voiced spheres

Singing in thunder round me, as have
made me

Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with un-
natural light— 185

Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural
hue—

Thy words are fraught with an unnatural
sound—

What may this mean?

Cain. It means—I pray thee, leave
me.

Abel. Not till we have pray'd and
sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice
alone— 190

Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. Both well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better: I care not
for that;

Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then—but let it be alone—
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill 195
Deserve the name of our great father's
son,

If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God, call'd not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood—'tis thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er 200
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee
To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

Cain.

No;

Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I?
Never

Knew I what calm was in the soul,
although 205
I have seen the elements still'd. My Abel,
leave me!

Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our
task together.

Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so—well, then,
What shall I do?

Abel. Choose one of those two
altars. 210

Cain. Choose for me: they to me are
so much turf

And stone.

Abel. Choose thou!

Cain. I have chosen.
Abel. 'Tis the highest,

And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?

Abel. Behold them here—
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks; 216
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit:

[*He gathers fruits.*

Behold them in their various bloom and
ripeness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle a
flame upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer
first 220

Thy prayer and thanksgiving with
sacrifice.

Cain. No—I am new to this; lead thou
the way,

And I will follow—as I may.

Abel [*kneeling*]. Oh, God!
Who made us, and who breathed the
breath of life

Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to
make 226

His children all lost, as they might have
been,

Had not thy justice been so temper'd with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to

Accord a pardon like a Paradise, 230
Compared with our great crimes:—Sole
Lord of light,

Of good, and glory, and eternity!

Without whom all were evil, and with
whom

Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence— 235

Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd—
Accept from out thy humble first of shep-
herd's

First of the first-born flocks—an offering,
In itself nothing—as what offering can be

Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven, bowing his
own 242

Even to the dust, of which he is, in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

Cain [standing erect during this speech].
Spirit! whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from
evil;

Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with
altars, 252

And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive
them!

Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine,
which smokes 255

On my right hand, hath shed it for thy
service

In the first of his flock, whose limbs now
reek

In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of
earth,

And milder seasons, which the unstain'd
turf 260

I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may
seem

Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours! If a shrine without
victim, 266

And altar without gore, may win thy
favour,

Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks
nothing

Which must be won by kneeling; if he's
evil, 270

Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and
may'st—

For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt!
since all

Rests upon thee; and good and evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy
will; 275

And whether that be good or ill I know
not,

Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate; which thus far I have
endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles
into a column of the brightest flame,
and ascends to heaven; while a whirl-
wind throws down the altar of CAIN,*

*and scatters the fruits abroad upon the
earth.*

Abel [kneeling]. Oh, brother, pray!
Jehovah's wrath with thee. 280

Cain. Why so?

Abel. Thy fruits are scatter'd
on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth
let them return;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere
the summer:

Thy burnt flesh-off'ring prospers better; see
How heaven licks up the flames, when
thick with blood! 285

Abel. Think not upon my offering's
acceptance,

But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any—

Abel [rising]. Cain! what meanest
thou?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatt'rer
of the clouds, 290

The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and
kids,

Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in
blood.

Abel [opposing him]. Thou shalt not:—
add not impious works to impious

Words! let that altar stand—'tis hallow'd
now 295

By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. *His!*

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking
blood,

To the pain of the bleating mothers,
which 300

Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the
pangs

Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody
record

Shall not stand in the sun, to shame
creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt
not touch my altar 305

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or
else

That sacrifice may be—

Abel. What mean'st thou?
Cain. Give—

Give way!—thy God loves blood!—then
look to it:— 310

Give way, ere he hath *more!*

Abel. In his great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which
hath

Had his acceptance.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT III

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strew'd this turf

Its native soil:

Abel [opposing him]. I love God far
more 315

Than life.

*Cain [striking him with a brand, on the
temples, which he snatches from the
altar].* Then take thy life unto thy
God,

Since he loves lives.

Abel [falls]. What hast thou done, my
brother?

Cain. Brother!

Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant,
and

Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did—Cain, give me—give me thy
hand; and tell 320

Poor Zillah—

Cain [after a moment's stupefaction]. My
hand! 'tis all red, and with—

What?

[A long pause.—Looking slowly round.
Where am I? alone! Where's Abel?
where

Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake!—why liest thou so on the green
earth?

'Tis not the hour of slumber;—why so
pale? 325

What hast thou!—thou wert full of life
this morn!

Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is
mockery;

And only done to daunt me:—'twas a
blow— 330

And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only
stir!

Why, so—that's well!—thou breath'st!
breathe upon me!

Oh, God! Oh, God!

Abel [very faintly]. What's he who
speaks of God?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him!

Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah;—she has but one
brother 335

Now. [ABEL dies.
Cain. And I none!—Who makes me
brotherless?

His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down
our lids.

His lips, too, are apart; why then he
breathes;

And yet I feel it not.—His heart!—his
heart! 340

Let me see, doth it beat? methinks—
No!—no!

This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world.
The earth swims round me:—what is
this?—'tis wet; [*Puts his hand to his
brow, and then looks at it.*]

And yet there are no dew's! 'Tis blood—
my blood— 345

My brother's and my own! and shed by
me!

Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he cannot be dead!—Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by
him. 350

Life cannot be so slight, as to be quench'd
Thus quickly!—he hath spoken to me
since—

What shall I say to him?—My brother!—
No:

He will not answer to that name; for
brethren

Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak
to me. 355

Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what
can it be?

'Tis Cain; and watching by my husband.
What

Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep?
Oh, heaven! 360

What means this paleness, and yon
stream?—No, no!

It is not blood; for who would shed his
blood?

Abel! what's this?—who hath done this?
He moves not;

He breathes not: and his hands drop down
from mine 364

With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!
Why cam'st thou not in time to save him
from

This violence? Whatever hath assail'd
him,

Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have
stepp'd in

Between him and aggression! Father!—
Eve!— 369

Adah!—come hither! Death is in the
world!

[Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents,
&c.

Cain [solus]. And who hath brought
him there?—I—who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the
thought

Empoison'd all my life, before I knew
His aspect—I have led him here, and given

My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his 376

Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last—a dreary dream

Had madden'd me;—but *he* shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here.—³⁸⁰
What do I see?—'Tis true!—My son!—my son!

Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine! [*To EVE.*]

Eve. Oh! speak not of it now: the serpent's fangs
Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel! Jehovah! this is punishment beyond ³⁸⁵
A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!

Adam. Who, Or what hath done this deed?—speak, Cain, since thou Wert present; was it some more hostile angel, Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild Brute of the forest?

Eve. Ah! a livid light ³⁹⁰
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! yon brand
Massy and bloody! snatch'd from off the altar,

And black with smoke, and red with—
Adam. Speak, my son! Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are, That we are not more miserable still. ³⁹⁵
Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not thou!

Eve. It was. I see it now—he hangs his guilty head, And covers his ferocious eye with hands Incarnadine.

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—³⁹⁹
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal, Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah! May the eternal serpent's curse be on him! For he was fitter for his seed than ours. May all his days be desolate! May—⁴⁰⁰

Adah. Hold! Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother, ⁴⁰⁶
And my betroth'd.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother—
Zillah no husband—me *no son!* for thus I curse him from my sight for evermore! All bonds I break between us as he broke That of his nature, in yon—Oh death! ⁴¹¹

Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incur'd thee?

Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this, Thy natural grief, lead to impiety! A heavy doom was long forespoken to us; And now that it begins, let it be borne

In such sort as may show our God that we Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve [*pointing to Cain*]. His will! the will of yon incarnate spirit

Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth ⁴²⁰

To strew it with the dead. May all the curses

Of life be on him! and his agonies Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us From Eden, till his children do by him As he did by his brother! May the swords And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—⁴²⁷

Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves

On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd

With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim! ⁴³⁰

His waking a continual dread of death! May the clear rivers turn to blood as he Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!

May every element shun or change to him! May he live in the pangs which others die with! ⁴³⁵

And death itself wax something worse than death

To him who first acquainted him with man! Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is *Cain*,

Through all the coming myriads of mankind,

Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire! ⁴⁴⁰

May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods

Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God! [*Exit EVE.*]

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together. ⁴⁴⁴

Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not

Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.

Come, Zillah! I must watch my husband's corse. ⁴⁵⁰

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone

Who hath provided for us this dread office. Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay, And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart!

[*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH, weeping.*]

CAIN: A MYSTERY

[ACT III]

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must
go forth. I am ready, 455
So shall our children be. I will bear

Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to
me,

To me—*thine own.*

Cain. Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee. 460

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou?

Dost thou not fear

To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee
brotherless.

I must not speak of this—it is between
thee 466

And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?

The Voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?

Cain. Am I then

My brother's keeper?

Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries
out, 470

Even from the ground, unto the Lord!—

Now art thou

Cursed from the earth, which open'd late
her mouth

To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash
hand.

Henceforth, when thou shalt till the
ground, it shall not

Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt
thou 475

Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

Adah. This punishment is more than
he can bear.

Behold, thou driv'st him from the face of
earth,

And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth, 480

'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could! but who
are they

Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone
earth

As yet unpeopled?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy
son? 485

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful,
nor say

That this poor aching breast now
nourishes

A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his
father is. 489

Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment
To him thou now see'st so besmear'd with
blood?

The fratricide might well engender parricides.—

But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance
shall 496

Be taken on his head. Come hither!

Cain.

Wouldst thou with me?

Angel.

To mark upon thy brow
Exemption from such deeds as thou hast
done.

Cain. No, let me die!

Angel.

It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN's brow.*

Cain.

It burns 500

My brow, but nought to that which is with-
in it.

Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

Angel.

Stern hast thou been and stub-
born from the womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till;
but he

Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he
tended. 505

Cain. After the fall too soon was I be-
gotten;

Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for
Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek 510

For life, nor did I make myself; but could I
With my own death redeem him from the
dust—

And why not so? let him return to day,
And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored

By God the life to him he loved; and
taken

From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel.

Who shall heal murder? what
is done, is done;

Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds
Unlike the last! [*The ANGEL disappears.*

Adah.

He's gone, let us go forth;
I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.

Cain.

Ah! little knows he what he
weeps for! 520

And I who have shed blood cannot shed
tears!

But the four rivers would not cleanse my
soul.

Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on
me?

Adah.

If I thought that he would not, I
would—
Cain [interrupting her]. No,

SCENE I]

CAIN: A MYSTERY

No more of threats: we have had too many
of them: 525

Go to our children; I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with
the dead;

Let us depart together.

Cain. Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what
thou now art 530

I know not! but if *thou* see'st what *I* am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his
God

Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—
Farewell!

I must not, dare not touch what I have
made thee.

I, who sprung from the same womb with
thee, drain'd 535

The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my
own,

In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare

To do that for thee, which thou shouldst
have done

For me—compose thy limbs into their
grave— 540

The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth!

Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast render'd to
me, I

Give thee back this. Now for the wilder-
ness.

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body
of ABEL.*

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom,
my brother, 545

Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for
thee,

I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed
them;

But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like
me,

Not only for thyself, but him who slew
thee. 550

Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with
thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we
take our way;

'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.
Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide,

and may our God
Be thine! Now let us carry forth our
children. 555

Cain. And *he* who lieth there was
childless. I

Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent mar-
riage couch,

And might have temper'd this stern blood
of mine,

Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!
O Abel! 561

Adah. Peace be with him!

Cain. But with *me*!—
[*Exeunt.*

HEAVEN AND EARTH

A MYSTERY

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI. : 'AND IT CAME TO
PASS . . . THAT THE SONS OF GOD SAW THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN THAT THEY WERE
FAIR; AND THEY TOOK THEM WIVES OF ALL WHICH THEY CHOSE.'

'And woman walling for her demon lover.'—COLERIDGE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ANGELS

SAMIASA.

AZAZIEL.

RAFAEL, THE ARCHANGEL.

MEN

NOAH AND HIS SONS.

IRAD.

JAPHET.

WOMEN

ANAH.

AHOLIBAMAH.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth.

Chorus of Mortals.

PART I

SCENE I.—*A woody and mountainous dis-
trict near Mount Ararat. Time, Midnight.*

Enter ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. Our father sleeps: it is the hour
when they

Who love us are accustom'd to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky

Ararat:—
How my heart beats!

Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.

Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble. 6

Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.

Anah. My sister, though
I love Azazel more than—oh, too much!

What was I going to say? my heart grows
impious.

Aho. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures? 10

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved
me:

This cannot be of good; and though I
know not

That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.

Aho. Then wed thee 15
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin!
There's a Japhet loves thee well, hath loved
thee long:

Marry, and bring forth dust!

Anah. I should have loved
Azazel not less were he mortal; yet 19
I am glad he is not. I cannot outlive him.
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored
him,

As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible; but yet I pity him: 25

His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the
seraph,

And he the perishable.

Aho. Rather say,
That he will single forth some other
daughter

Of earth, and love her as he once loved
Anah. 30

Anah. And if it should be so, and she
loved him,

Better thus than that he should weep for
me.

Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's
love,

All seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from
me.

But to our invocation!—"Tis the hour. 35
Anah. Seraph!

From thy sphere!

Whatever star contain thy glory;

In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with 'the

seven,' 40

Though through space infinite and
hoary

Before thy bright wings worlds be
driven,

Yet hear!

Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!

And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her. 46

Thou canst not tell,—and never be
Such pangs decreed to aught save
me,—

The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years, 50

Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
With me thou canst not sympathise,

Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving

dust

Ne'er wept beneath the skies. 55

Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou
see'st

The face of him who made thee
great,

As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate;

Yet, Seraph dear! 60
Oh hear!

For thou hast loved me, and I would
not die

Until I know what I must die in
knowing,

That thou forgett'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart death could not

keep from o'erflowing 65

For thee, immortal essence as thou
art!

Great is their love who love in sin
and fear;

And such, I feel, are waging in my
heart

A war unworthy: to an Adamite
Forgive, my Seraph! that such

thoughts appear, 70
For sorrow is our element;

Delight

An Eden kept afar from sight,
Though sometimes with our visions

blent.

The hour is near 75
Which tells me we are not abandon'd
quite.—

Appear! Appear!

Seraph!

My own Azazel! be but here,
And leave the stars to their own light.

Aho. Samiasa! 81

Wheresoe'er

Thou rulest in the upper air—
Or warring with the spirits who may

dare

Dispute with him 85

Who made all empires, empire; or recall-
ing

Some wandering star, which shoots
through the abyss,

Whose tenants dying, while their world
is falling,

Share the dim destiny of clay in this;
Or joining with the inferior cherubim,

Thou deignest to partake their hymn—
Samiasa!

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.
Many may worship thee, that will I not:

If that thy spirit down to mine may move
thee 95

Descend and share my lot!

Though I be form'd of clay,

And thou of beams

More bright than those of day

On Eden's streams,

Thine immortality cannot repay

With love more warm than mine

My love. There is a ray

SCENE I]

In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
 I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
 It may be hidden long: death and decay
 Our mother Eve bequeath'd us—but
 my heart
 Defies it: though this life must pass away,
 Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part?
 Thou art immortal—so am I: I feel—
 I feel my immortality o'ersweep
 All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and
 peal,
 Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
 Into my ears this truth—'Thou liv'st for
 ever!'

But if it be in joy
 I know not, nor would know;
 That secret rests with the Almighty giver,
 Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss
 and woe.
 But thee and me he never can destroy;
 Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm;
 we are
 Of as eternal essence, and must war
 With him if he will war with us: with *thee*
 I can share all things, even immortal
 sorrow;
 For thou hast ventured to share life with
 me,
 And shall I shrink from thine eternity?
 No! though the serpent's sting should
 pierce me thorough,
 And thou thyself wert like the serpent,
 coil
 Around me still! and I will smile,
 And curse thee not; but hold
 Thee in as warm a fold
 As—but descend, and prove
 A mortal's love

For an immortal. If the skies contain
 More joy than thou canst give and take,
 remain!
Anah. Sister! sister! I view them wing-
 ing
 Their bright way through the parted night.
Aho. The clouds from off their pinions
 flinging,
 As though they bore to-morrow's light.
Anah. But if our father see the sight!
Aho. He would but deem it was the
 moon
 Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
 An hour too soon.

Anah. They come! *he* comes!—
 Azaziell!
Aho. Haste
 To meet them! Oh! for wings to bear
 My spirit, while they hover there,
 To Samiasa's breast!
Anah. Lo! they have kindled all the
 west,
 Like a returning sunset;—lo!
 On Ararat's late secret crest
 A mild and many-colour'd bow,

HEAVEN AND EARTH

The remnant of their flashing path,
 Now shines! and now, behold! it hath
 Return'd to night, as rippling foam,
 Which the leviathan hath lash'd
 From his unfathomable home,
 When sporting on the face of the calm
 deep,
 Subsides soon after he again hath dash'd
 Down, down, to where the ocean's
 fountains sleep.
Aho. They have touch'd earth! Samiasa!
Anah. My Azaziell!
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

Enter IRAD and JAPHET.

Irada. Despond not: wherefore wilt
 thou wander thus
 To add thy silence to the silent night,
 And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
 They cannot aid thee.
Japh. But they soothe me—now
 Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
 Methinks a being that is beautiful
 Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
 The eternal beauty of undying things.
 Oh, *Anah!*

But she loves thee not.
Japh. Alas!
Irada. And proud Aholibamah spurns
 me also.
Japh. I feel for thee too.

Irada. Let her keep her pride,
 Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn;
 It may be, time too will avenge it.

Japh. Canst thou
 Find joy in such a thought?

Irada. Nor joy nor sorrow.
 I loved her well, I would have loved her
 better,
 Had love been met with love: as 'tis, I
 leave her

To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.
Japh. What destinies?

Irada. I have some cause to think
 She loves another.

Japh. *Anah!*
Irada. No; her sister.

Japh. What other?
Irada. That I know not; but her air,
 If not her words, tells me she loves
 another.

Japh. Ay, but not *Anah*: she but
 loves her God.

Irada. What'er she loveth, so she loves
 thee not,

What can it profit thee?

Japh. True, nothing; but
 I love.

Irada. And so did I.
Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
 Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou
 happier?

Irads. I pity thee.
Japh. Me! why?
Japh. For being happy,
 Deprived of that which makes my misery.
Irads. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
 And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels 30
 Than all our father's herds would bring, if weigh'd
 Against the metal of the sons of Cain—
 The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
 As if such useless and discolour'd trash,
 The refuse of the earth, could be received
 For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all 36
 Our flocks and wilderness afford.—Go, Japhet,
 Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon—
 I must back to my rest.
Japh. And so would I
 If I could rest.
Irads. Thou wilt not to our tents then?
Japh. No, Irad; I will to the cavern, whose 41
 Mouth they say opens from the internal world
 To let the inner spirits of the earth
 Forth when they walk its surface.
Irads. Wherefore so?
 What wouldst thou there?
Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit 45
 With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot,
 And I am hopeless.
Irads. But 'tis dangerous;
 Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors.
 I must go with thee.
Japh. Irad, no; believe me
 I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.
Irads. But evil things will be thy foe the more 51
 As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
 Or let mine be with thine.
Japh. No, neither, Irad;
 I must proceed alone.
Irads. Then peace be with thee! [Exit IRAD.
Japh. [solus]. Peace! I have sought it where it should be found, 55
 In love—with love, too, which perhaps deserved it;
 And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart,
 A weakness of the spirit, listless days,
 And nights inexorable to sweet sleep,
 Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm 60
 Of desolation, and the stillness of
 The untrodden forest, only broken by
 The sweeping tempest through its groan-
 ing boughs;

Yes. Such is the sullen or the fitful state
 Of my mind overworn. The earth's grown
 wicked, 65
 And many signs and portents have
 proclaim'd
 A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming
 doom
 To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
 When the dread hour denounced shall
 open wide
 The fountains of the deep, how mightest
 thou 70
 Have lain within this bosom, folded from
 The elements; this bosom, which in vain
 Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more
 vainly,
 While thine—Oh, God! at least remit to
 her
 Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the
 failing 75
 As a star in the clouds, which cannot
 quench,
 Although they obscure it for an hour. My
 Anah!
 How would I have adored thee, but thou
 wouldst not;
 And still would I redeem thee—see thee
 live
 When ocean is earth's grave, and, un-
 opposed 80
 By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
 Lord of the shoreless sea and watery
 world,
 Shall wonder at his boundlessness of
 realm. [Exit JAPHET.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.
Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?
Shem. He went forth,
 According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
 He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
 Towards Anah's tents, round which he
 hovers nightly,
 Like a dove round and round its pillaged
 nest;
 Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
 Which opens to the heart of Ararat. 90
Noah. What doth he there? It is an
 evil spot
 Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
 Than even wicked men resort there: he
 Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
 Although he could not wed her if she
 loved him, 95
 And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy
 hearts
 Of men! that one of my blood, knowing
 well
 The destiny and evil of these days,
 And that the hour approacheth, should
 indulge
 In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the
 way; 100
 He must be sought for!

Shem. Go not forward, father:
I will seek Japhet.

Noah. Do not fear for me:
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah.—Let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the
sisters? ¹⁰⁵

Noah. No; to the cavern of the
Caucasus.

[*Exeunt NOAH and SHEM.*]

SCENE III.—*The mountains.—A cavern,
and the rocks of Caucasus.*

Japh. [*solus*]. Ye wilds, that look
eternal; and thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye
mountains,

So varied and so terrible in beauty;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots
with stone ⁵

In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach
them—yes,

Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed,
rent, hurl'd ⁹

Before the mass of waters; and yon cave,
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths search'd by the
sweeping wave,

And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
And man—Oh, men! my fellow-beings!
Who

Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My
kinsmen, ¹⁶

Alas! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of
Anah

While I had hope? or the more savage
haunts, ²⁰
Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd for
her?

And can it be!—Shall you exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
No more to have the morning sun break
forth, ²⁵

And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow? no more to
have

Day's broad orb drop behind its head at
even,

Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
No more to be the beacon of the world,
For angels to alight on, as the spot ³¹
Nearest the stars? And can those words
'no more'

Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things
reserved ³⁴

By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May

*He preserve them, and I not have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters
from*

A doom which even some serpent, with
his mate,

Shall 'scape to save his kind to be pro-
long'd,

To hiss and sting through some emerging
world, ⁴⁰

Reeking and dank from out the slime,
whose ooze

Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this, until
The salt morass subside into a sphere

Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
'The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,

Of yet quick myriads of all life? How
much ⁴⁶

Breath will be still'd at once! All-
beauteous world!

So young, so mark'd out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,

And night by night, thy number'd days
and nights. ⁵⁰

I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more;
but as

A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as—Oh God! and canst thou—

[*He pauses.*]

[*A rushing sound from the cavern is
heard, and shouts of laughter—after-
wards a Spirit passes.*]

Japh. In the name ⁵⁵
Of the Most High, what art thou?

Spirit [*laughs*]. Ha! ha! ha!
Japh. By all that earth holds holiest,
speak!

Spirit [*laughs*]. Ha! ha! ha!
Japh. By the approaching deluge! by
the earth

Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
The deep which will lay open all her foun-
tains! ⁶⁰

The heaven which will convert her clouds
to seas,

And the Omnipotent who makes and
crushes!

Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me!

Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou? ⁶⁵
Japh. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha! ha! ha!
[*Spirit vanishes.*]

Japh. How the fiend mocks the
tortures of a world,

The coming desolation of an orb,
On which the sun shall rise and warm no
life!

How the earth sleeps! and all that in it is
Sleep too upon the very eve of death! ⁷¹

Why should they wake to meet it? What
are here,

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

Which look like death in life, and speak
like things
Born ere this dying world? They come like
clouds!

[Various Spirits pass from the cavern.
Spirit. Rejoice! 75

The abhorred race
Which could not keep in Eden their high
place,

But listen'd to the voice
Of knowledge without power,
Are nigh the hour 80
Of death!

Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor
sorrow,

Nor years, nor heart-break, nor Time's
sapping motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-
morrow!

Earth shall be ocean! 85
And no breath,

Save of the winds, be on the unbounded
wave!

Angels shall tire their wings, but find no
spot:

Not even a rock from out the liquid grave
Shall lift its point to save, 90

Or show the place where strong Despair
hath died,

After long looking o'er the ocean wide
For the expected ebb which cometh not:

All shall be void,
Destroy'd! 95

Another element shall be the lord
Of life, and the abhorr'd

Children of dust be quench'd; and of each
hue

Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
And of the variegated mountain 100

Shall nought remain
Unchanged, or of the level plain;

Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in
vain:

All merged within the universal foun-
tain,

Man, earth, and fire, shall die, 105
And sea and sky

Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
Upon the foam

Who shall erect a home?
Japh. [coming forward]. My sire! 110

Earth's seed shall not expire;
Only the evil shall be put away

From day.
Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the
waste:

Who howl your hideous joy 115
When God destroys whom you dare not
destroy;

Hence! haste!
Back to your inner caves!

Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place, 121

And drive your sullen race

Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing winds,
In restless wretchedness along all
space!

Spirit. Son of the saved! 124
When thou and thine have braved

The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,

Shall thou and thine be good or happy?—
No!

Thy new world and new race shall be of
woe—

Less goodly in their aspect, in their
years 130

Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,

The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal
bride.

Thine shall be nothing of the past, save
tears.

And art thou not ashamed 135
Thus to survive,

And eat, and drink, and wive?
With a base heart so far subdued and

tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction

named,
Without such grief and courage, as should 140

rather
Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd

father,
And build thy city o'er the drown'd

earth's grave?
Who would outlive their kind,

Except the base and blind? 145
Mine

Hateth thine
As of a different order in the sphere,

But not our own.
There is not one who hath not left a

throne 150
Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness

here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.

Go, wretch! and give
A life like thine to other wretches—live!

And when the annihilating waters roar
Above what they have done,

Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,
And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!

Thyself for being his son!
Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

Rejoice! 160
No more the human voice

Shall vex our joys in middle air
With prayer;

No more
Shall they adore; 165

And we, who ne'er for ages have adored
The prayer-exacting Lord,

To whom the omission of a sacrifice
Is vice;

We, we shall view the deep's salt sources
pour'd 170

SCENE III]

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Until one element shall do the work
Of all in chaos; until they,
The creatures proud of their poor clay,
Shall perish, and their bleached bones
shall lurk

In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains,
where 175
The deep shall follow to their latest lair;
Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each
other,

And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his
brother; 180

Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky:

While a brief truce
Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation
Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking
soil

Into a world, shall give again to Time
New beings—years, diseases, sorrow,
crime— 191

With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until—

Japh. [interrupting them]. The eternal
Will

Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil; and redeem 195
Unto himself all times, all things;
And, gather'd under his almighty
wings,

Abolish hell!

And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth, 200
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once
he fell,
And even the very demons shall do
well!

Spirits. And when shall take effect this
wondrous spell?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh;
first in pain, 205

And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the
mortal chain,

Till Earth wax hoary:

War with yourselves, and hell, and heaven,
in vain,

Until the clouds look gory 210
With the blood reeking from each battle-
plain;

New times, new climates, new arts, new
men; but still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest
ill,

Shall be amongst your race in different
forms;

But the same moral storms 215

Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves.

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice!

Mortal, farewell! 219

Hark! hark! already we can hear the voice
Of growing ocean's gloomy swell;
The winds, too, plume their piercing
wings;

The clouds have nearly fill'd their
springs;

The fountains of the great deep shall be
broken,

And heaven set wide her windows;
while mankind 225

View, unacknowledged, each tremendous
token—

Still, as they were from the beginning,
blind.

We hear the sound they cannot hear,
The mustering thunders of the threat-
ening sphere;

Yet a few hours their coming is
delay'd; 230

Their flashing banners, folded still on
high,

Yet undisplay'd,

Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.

How! how! oh Earth!

Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth;
Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink
below 236

The ocean's overflow!

The wave shall break upon your cliffs;
and shells,

The little shells, of ocean's least things be
Deposed where now the eagle's offspring
dwells— 240

How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless
sea!

And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,
Unanswer'd, save by the encroaching
swell;—

While man shall long in vain for his broad
wings,

The wings which could not save:—

Where could he rest them, while the whole
space brings 246

Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his
grave?

Brethren, rejoice!

And loudly lift each superhuman voice—
All die, 250

Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed—
The seed of Seth,

Exempt for future sorrow's sake from
death,

But of the sons of Cain

None shall remain; 255

And all his goodly daughters

Must lie beneath the desolating waters;
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

Which would not spare 260
 Beings even in death so fair.
 It is decreed,
 All die!
 And to the universal human cry
 The universal silence shall succeed! 265
 Fly, brethren, fly!
 But still rejoice!
 We fell!
 They fall!
 So perish all 270
 These petty foes of Heaven who shrink
 from hell!
[The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.
Japh. [solus]. God hath proclaim'd
 the destiny of earth;
 My father's ark of safety hath announced it;
 The very demons shriek it from their
 caves;
 The scroll of Enoch prophesied it long
 In silent books, which, in their silence,
 say 276
 More to the mind than thunder to the ear:
 And yet men listen'd not, nor listen; but
 Walk darkling to their doom; which,
 though so nigh,
 Shakes them no more in their dim dis-
 belief, 280
 Than their last cries shall shake the
 Almighty purpose,
 Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfils it.
 No sign yet hangs its banner in the air;
 The clouds are few, and of their wonted
 texture; 284
 The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
 As on the fourth day of creation, when
 God said unto him, 'Shine!' and he broke
 forth
 Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
 Unform'd forefather of mankind—but
 roused
 Before the human orison the earlier 290
 Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
 Which in the open firmament of heaven
 Have wings like angels, and like them
 salute
 Heaven first each day before the Adam-
 ites:
 Their matins now draw nigh—the east is
 kindling— 295
 And they will sing! and day will break!
 Both near,
 So near the awful close! For these must
 drop
 Their outworn pinions on the deep; and
 day,
 After the bright course of a few brief
 morrows,—
 Ay, day will rise; but upon what?—a
 chaos, 300
 Which was ere day; and which, renew'd,
 makes time
 Nothing! for, without life, what are the
 hours?

No more to dust than is eternity
 Unto Jehovah, who created both.
 Without him, even eternity would be
 A void: without man, time, as made for
 man, 306
 Dies with man, and is swallow'd in that
 deep
 Which has no fountain; as his race will be
 Devour'd by that which drowns his infant
 world.—
 What have we here? Shapes of both earth
 and air? 310
 No—all of heaven, they are so beautiful.
 I cannot trace their features; but their
 forms,
 How lovelily they move along the side
 Of the grey mountain, scattering its mist!
 And after the swart savage spirits, whose
 infernal immortality pour'd forth 316
 Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall
 be
 Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
 To tell me the reprieve of our young
 world,
 For which I have so often pray'd—They
 come! 320
 Anah! oh, God! and with her—

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, and
 AHOLIBAMAH.
 Anah. Japhet!
 Sam. Lo!
 A son of Adam!
 Aza. What doth the earth-
 born here,
 While all his race are slumbering?
 Japh. Angel! what
 Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be
 on high?
 Aza. Know'st thou not, or forgett'st
 thou, that a part 325
 Of our great function is to guard thine
 earth?
 Japh. But all good angels have for-
 saken earth,
 Which is condemn'd; nay, even the evil fly
 The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
 In vain, and long, and still to be, beloved!
 Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those
 hours 331
 When no good spirit longer lights below?
 Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee;
 yet, yet
 Forgive me—
 Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no
 more
 Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly
 tempted. 335
 Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son
 of Noah!
 We know thee not.
 Japh. The hour may come when thou
 May'st know me better; and thy sister
 know

Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been ³⁴⁰

Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow, mix'd with
wrath,

How have Azazel, or myself, brought on
thee

Wrong?

Japh. Wrong! the greatest of all
wrongs; but thou

Say'st well; though she be dust, I did not,
could not, ³⁴⁵

Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said
That word so often! but now say it, ne'er

To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er
Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the

power ³⁴⁹
To save this beautiful—these beautiful

Children of Cain?

Aza. From what?

Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye

Have shared man's sin, and, it may be,
now must

Partake his punishment; or, at the least,
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till
now ³⁵⁵

To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.
Japh. And hath not the Most High

expounded them?
Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

Aho. So be it!
If they love as they are loved, they will not

shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare

An immortality of agonies ³⁶¹
With Samiasa!

Anah. Sister! sister! speak not
Thus.

Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah?

Anah. Yes, for thee:
I would resign the greater remnant of

This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japh. It is for him, then! for the seraph
thou

Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast
not

Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, can-

not ³⁷⁰
Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent

Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto

The Highest: but if he can save thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid

Alone can do so.
Anah. Ah! he speaks of death.

Sam. Of death to us! and those who
are with us!

But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear;
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but

those ³⁸⁰

Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found
Righteous enough to save his children.

Would
His power was greater of redemption! or

That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy,

she, ³⁸⁵
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could

share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of

The seed of Seth!
Aho. And dost thou think that we,

With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's,
blood

Warm in our veins,—strong Cain! who
was begotten ³⁹⁰

In Paradise,—would mingle with Seth's
children?

Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's
dottage?

No, not to save all earth, were earth in
peril!

Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholi-
bamah! ³⁹⁶

Too much of the forefather whom thou
vauntest

Has come down in that haughty blood
which springs

From him who shed the first, and that a
brother's! ³⁹⁹

But thou, my Anah! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not; 'tis a word I cannot

Part with, although I must from thee. My
Anah!

Thou who dost rather make me dream that
Abel

Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art

The rest of the stern Cainites, save in
beauty, ⁴⁰⁶

For all of them are fairest in their favour—
Aho. [interrupting him]. And wouldst

thou have her like our father's foe
In mind, in soul? If I partook thy thought,

And dream'd that aught of Abel was in
her!— ⁴¹⁰

Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou makest
strife.

Japh. Offspring of Cain, thy father did
so!

Aho. But
He slew not Seth; and what hast thou to do

With other deeds between his God and
him?

Japh. Thou speakest well: his God
hath judg'd him, and ⁴¹⁵

I had not nam'd his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink

From what he had done.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

Aho. He was our fathers' father;
The eldest born of man, the strongest,
bravest,
And most enduring:—Shall I blush for
him 420

From whom we had our being? Look
upon
Our race; behold their stature and their
beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of
days—

Japh. They are number'd.

Aho. Be it so! but while yet their hours
endure,

I glory in my brethren and our fathers.

Japh. My sire and race but glory in
their God, 426
Anah! and thou?—

Anah. What'er our God decrees,
The God of Seth, as Cain, I must obey,
And will endeavour patiently to obey.

But could I dare to pray in his dread hour
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my sister!
What were the world, or other worlds, or
all

The brightest future, without the sweet
past— 435

Thy love, my father's, all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like
the stars,

Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholi-
bamah!

Oh! if there should be mercy—seek it,
find it: 440

I abhor death, because that thou must die.

Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with
his father's ark,

The bugbear he hath built to scare the
world,

Shaken my sister? Are we not the loved
Of seraphs? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives? 446

Rather than thus—But the enthusiast
dreams

The worst of dreams, the fantasies
engender'd

By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this
firm earth, 450

And bid those clouds and waters take a
shape

Distinct from that which we and all our
sires

Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?

Japh. He whose one word produced
them.

Aho. Who heard that word?

Japh. The universe, which leap'd
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in
scorn? 456

Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!

Aho. I have ever hail'd our Maker,
Samiasa,

As thine, and mine: a God of love, not
sorrow. 460

Japh. Alas! what else is love but

sorrow? Even

He who made earth in love had soon to
grieve

Above its first and best inhabitants.

Aho. 'Tis said so.

Japh. It is even so.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Japhet! What
Dost thou here with these children of the
wicked? 465

Dread'st thou not to partake their coming
doom?

Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then, 470
Who leave the throne of God, to take
them wives

From out the race of Cain; the sons of
heaven,

Who seek earth's daughters for their
beauty?

Aza. Patriarch!

Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such com-
munion!

Has not God made a barrier between
earth 475

And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?

Sam. Was not man made in high
Jehovah's image?

Did God not love what he had made?
And what

Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love?

Noah. I am 480
But man, and was not made to judge man-
kind,

Far less the sons of God; but as our God
Has deign'd to commune with me, and
reveal

His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat

Unto a perishable and perishing, 486
Even on the very eve of perishing, world,
Cannot be good.

Aza. What! though it were
to save?

Noah. Not ye in all your glory can
redeem

What he who made you glorious hath con-
demn'd. 490

Were your immortal mission safety,
'twould

Be general, not for two, though beautiful;
And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemn'd.

Japh. Oh, father! say it not.

Noah. Son! son!
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom,
forget

That they exist: they soon shall cease to be,
While thou shalt be the sire of a new
world,
And better.

Japh. Let me die with *this*, and
them!

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a
thought, but shalt not; he
Who *can*, redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee, 500
More than what he, thy son, prefers to
both?

Noah. Ask him who made thee greater
than myself

And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

Enter RAPHAEL the Archangel.

Raph. Spirits!

Whose seat is near the throne,
What do ye here?

Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown
Now that the hour is near 510
When earth must be alone?

Return!

Adore and burn
In glorious homage with the elected
'seven,'

Your place is heaven. 515

Sam. Raphael!

The first and fairest of the sons of God,
How long hath this been law,
That earth by angels must be left untrod?
Earth! which oft saw 520

Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!
The world he loved, and made
For love; and oft have we obey'd
His frequent mission with delighted
pinions:

Adoring him in his least works dis-
play'd; 525

Watching this youngest star of his
dominions;

And, as the latest birth of his great word,
Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.

Why is thy brow severe?

And wherefore speak'st thou of destruc-
tion near? 530

Raph. Had Samiasa and Azazel been
In their true place, with the angelic choir,
Written in fire

They would have seen

Jehovah's late decree, 535
And not inquired their Maker's breath of
me:

But ignorance must ever be

A part of sin;

And even the spirits' knowledge shall
grow less

As they wax proud within; 540
For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.
When all good angels left the world, ye
stay'd,

Stung with strange passions, and debased
By mortal feelings for a mortal maid:
But ye are pardon'd thus far, and
replaced 545
With your pure equals. Hence! away!
away!

Or stay,

And lose eternity by that delay!

Aza. And thou! if earth be thus for-
bidden

In the decree 550

To us until this moment hidden,

Dost thou not err as we

In being here?

Raph. I came to call ye back to your
fit sphere,

In the great name and at the word of
God. 555

Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce
less dear

That which I came to do: till now we trod
Together the eternal space; together
Let us still walk the stars. True, earth
must die!

Her race, return'd into her womb, must
wither, 560

And much which she inherits: but oh!
why

Cannot this earth be made, or be
destroy'd,

Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks? immortal still

In their immeasurable forfeiture. 565

Our brother Satan fell; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared
endure!

But ye who still are pure!

Seraphs! less mighty than that mightiest
one,

Think how he was undone! 570

And think if tempting man can com-
pensate

For heaven desired too late?

Long have I war'd,

Long must I war

With him who deem'd it hard 575

To be created, and to acknowledge
him

Who midst the cherubim

Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand
dim.

I loved him—beautiful he was: oh,
heaven 580

Save *his* who made, what beauty and what
power

Was ever like to Satan's! Would the hour

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

In which he fell could ever be forgiven!
The wish is impious: but, oh ye!

Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd! Eternity

With him, or with his God, is in your
choice: 586

He hath not tempted you; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares
exempt:

But man hath listen'd to his voice,
And ye to woman's—beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her
kiss, 591

The snake but vanquish'd dust; but she
will draw

A second host from heaven, to break
heaven's law.

Yet, yet, oh fly!

Ye cannot die; 595

But they

Shall pass away,

While ye shall fill with shrieks the uppersky
For perishable clay,

Whose memory in your immortality 600

Shall long outlast the sun which gave
them day.

Think how your essence differeth from
theirs

In all but suffering! why partake

The agony to which they must be heirs—
Born to be plough'd with years, and sown

with cares, 605

And reap'd by Death, lord of the human
soil?

Even had their days been left to toil their
path

Through time to dust, unshorten'd by
God's wrath,

Still they are Evil's prey and Sorrow's
spoil.

Aho. Let them fly! 610

I hear the voice which says that all must
die,

Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs
died;

And that on high

An ocean is prepared,

While from below 615

The deep shall rise to meet heaven's over-
flow.

Few shall be spared,

It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.

Sister! since it is so, 620

And the eternal Lord

In vain would be implored

For the remission of one hour of woe,
Let us resign even what we have adored,

And meet the wave, as we would meet the
sword, 625

If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,
And wailing less for us than those who
shall

Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,
And, when the fatal waters are allay'd,

Weep for the myriads who can weep no
more. 630

Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,

And yours to live for ever:

But which is best, a dead eternity, 635
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.

Obeys him, as we shall obey;

I would not keep this life of mine in clay

An hour beyond his will; 639

Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,
For all the mercy which Seth's race

Find still.

Fly!

And as your pinions bear ye back to
heaven,

Think that my love still mounts with thee
on high, 645

Samiasa!

And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to
weep,—

Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!
Anah. And must we die? 650

And must I lose thee too,

Azazel?

Oh, my heart! my heart!

Thy prophecies were true!

And yet thou wert so happy too!

The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls
as new: 656

But yet depart!

Ah! why?

Yet let me not retain thee—fly!

My pangs can be but brief; but thine
would be 660

Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for me.
Too much already hast thou deign'd

To one of Adam's race!

Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,
But to the spirits who have not disdain'd

To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath

been hurl'd

From his once archangelic throne

Into some unknown world:

And thou, Azazel! No— 670

Thou shalt not suffer woe

For me. Away! nor weep!

Thou canst not weep; but yet

May'st suffer more, not weeping: then
forget

Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling
deep 675

Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
Being gone, 'twill be less difficult to die.

Japh. Oh, say not so!

Father! and thou, archangel, thou!

Surely celestial mercy lurks below 680

That pure severe serenity of brow:

Let them not meet this sea without a
shore,

Save in our ark, or let me be no more!

SCENE III]

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace!
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong! 686

Live as he wills it—die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of
Cain's.

Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease
To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish
plaint. 690

Wouldst thou have God commit a sin
for thee?

Such would it be
To alter his intent
For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
And bear what Adam's race must bear,
and can. 695

Japh. Ay, father! but when they are
gone,

And we are all alone,
Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear
land,

And dearer, silent friends and brethren,
all 700

Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall
then command?

Can we in desolation's peace have rest?
Oh God! be thou a God, and spare
Yet while 'tis time; 705

Renew not Adam's fall.
Mankind were then but twain,
But they are numerous now as are the waves
And the tremendous rain,

Whose drops shall be less thick than
would their graves, 710

Were graves permitted to the seed of
Cain.

Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of
thine's a crime,
Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.

Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak
in passion: Ye!

Who are, or should be, passionless and
pure, 715

May now return with me.
Sam. It may not be:
We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?
Aza. He hath said it, and I say,
Amen!

Raph. Again!
Then from this hour, 720

Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
And aliens from your God,
Farewell!

Japh. Alas! where shall they dwell?
Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
Are howling from the mountain's
bosom: 726

There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each
blossom:

Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry!
In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
And hover round the mountain, where
before

Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
Yet dared to soar,

Even when the waters wax'd too fierce
to brave. 735

Soon it shall be their only shore,
And then, no more!

Japh. The sun! the sun!
He riseth, but his better light is gone;
And a black circle, bound 740

His glaring disk around,
Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath
shone!

The clouds return into the hues of
night,

Save where their brazen-colour'd edges
streak

The verge where brighter morns were wont
to break. 745

Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,
The distant thunder's harbinger, appears!

It cometh! hence, away!
Leave to the elements their evil prey!

Hence to where our all-hallow'd ark up-
rears 750

Its safe and wreckless sides!
Japh. Oh, father, stay!

Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides!
Noah. Must we not leave all life to
such?

Begone!
Japh. Not I. 755

Noah. Then die
With them!

How dardest thou look on that prophetic
sky,

And seek to save what all things now
condemn,

In overwhelming unison 760
With just Jehovah's wrath!

Japh. Can rage and justice join in the
same path?

Noah. Blasphemer! dardest thou
murmur even now?

Raph. Patriarch, be still a father!
smooth thy brow:

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink:
He knows not what he says, yet shall not
drink 766

With sobs the salt foam of the swelling
waters:

But be, when passion passeth, good as
thou,

Nor perish like heaven's children with
man's daughters.

Aho. The tempest cometh; heaven
and earth unite 770

For the annihilation of all life.
Unequal is the strife

Between our strength and the Eternal
Might!

HEAVEN AND EARTH

[PART I

Sam. But ours is with thee; we will
bear ye far
To some untroubled star, 775
Where thou, and Anah, shalt partake our
lot:

And if thou dost not weep for thy lost
earth,
Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.
Anah. Oh! my dear father's tents, my
place of birth,
And mountains, land, and woods! when
ye are not, 780
Who shall dry up my tears?

Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not; though we are shut from heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we can not be
driven.

Raph. Rebel! thy words are wicked,
as thy deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak: the flaming
sword, 785

Which chased the first-born out of
Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.

Aza. It cannot slay us: threaten dust
with death,

And talk of weapons unto that which
bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal
eyes? 790

Raph. The moment cometh to ap-
prove thy strength;
And learn at length

How vain to war with what thy God com-
mands:

Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling—
God! oh God! 795

What have we done? Yet spare!
Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth
their prayer!

The dragon crawls from out his den,
To herd, in terror, innocent with men;
And the birds scream their agony through
air. 800

Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod
Of wrath, and pity thine own world's
despair!

Hear not man only but all nature plead!
Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye
wretched sons of clay, 804

I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis decreed!
[Exit RAPHAEL.]

Japh. Some clouds sweep on as
vultures for their prey,
While others, fix'd as rocks, await the
word

At which their wrathful vials shall be
pour'd.

No azure more shall robe the firmament,

Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death
hath risen: 810

In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare
Hath wound itself around the dying air.

Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-
founded prison,

To which the elements again repair,
To turn it into what it was: beneath 815
The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,
As was the eagle's nestling once within
Its mother's.—Let the coming chaos chafe
With all its elements! Heed not their din!
A brighter world than this, where thou
shalt breathe 820

Ethereal life, will we explore:
These darken'd clouds are not the only skies.

[AZAZIEL and SAMIASA fly off and dis-
appear with ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.]

Japh. They are gone! They have dis-
appear'd amidst the roar

Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all earth's
life, 825

Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes.

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all—all—all
behind?

While safe amidst the elemental strife,
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark? 831

A Mother [offering her infant to JAPHET].
Oh let this child embark!

I brought him forth in woe,
But thought it joy

To see him to my bosom clinging so.
Why was he born? 836

What hath he done—
My unwean'd son—

To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?
What is there in this milk of mine, that
death 840

Should stir all heaven and earth up to
destroy

My boy.
And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?

Save him, thou seed of Seth!
Or cursed be—with him who made 845

Thee and thy race, for which we are
betray'd!

Japh. Peace! 'tis no hour for curses,
but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!

And where

Shall prayer ascend, 850
When the swoln clouds unto the moun-
tains bend

And burst,
And gushing oceans every barrier rend,

Until the very deserts know no thirst?
Accursed 855

SCENE III]

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Be he who made thee and thy sire!
We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
But as we know the worst,
Why should our hymn be raised, our knees
be bent

Before the implacable Omnipotent, 860
Since we must fall the same?

If he hath made earth, let it be his shame,
To make a world for torture.—Lo! they
come,

The loathsome waters, in their rage!
And with their roar make wholesome
nature dumb! 865

The forests' trees (coeval with the hour
When Paradise upsprung,
Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her
dower,

Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
So massy, vast, yet green in their old
age, 870

Are overtopp'd,
Their summer blossoms by the surges
lopp'd,

Which rise, and rise, and rise.
Vainly we look up to the lowering skies—

They meet the seas, 875
And shut out God from our beseeching
eyes.

Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine
ease,

In thine allotted ocean-tent;
And view, all floating o'er the element,
The corpses of the world of thy young
days: 880

Then to Jehovah raise
Thy song of praise!

A Mortal. Blessed are the dead
Who die in the Lord!

And though the waters be o'er earth out-
spread, 885

Yet, as *his* word,
Be the decree adored!

He gave me life—he taketh but
The breath which is his own:

And though these eyes should be for ever
shut, 890

Nor longer this weak voice before his
throne

Be heard in supplicating tone,
Still blessed be the Lord,

For what is past,
For that which is: 895

For all are his,
From first to last—

Time, space, eternity, life, death—
The vast known and immeasurable un-
known.

He made, and can unmake; 900
And shall I, for a little gasp of breath,
Blaspheme and groan?

No; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the universe may
quake!

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly? 905
Not to the mountains high;

For now their torrents rush, with double
roar,

To meet the ocean, which, advancing
still,

Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave. 910

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save!
Our valley is no more:

My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,

The pleasant trees that o'er our noon-
day bent, 915

And sent forth evening songs from
sweetest birds,

The little rivulet which freshen'd all
Our pastures green,

No more are to be seen.
When to the mountain cliff I climb'd this
morn, 920

I turn'd to bless the spot,
And not a leaf appear'd about to fall;—

And now they are not!
Why was I born?

Japh. To die! in youth to die!
And happier in that doom, 925

Than to behold the universal tomb,
Which I

Am thus condemn'd to weep above in
vain.

Why, when all perish, why must I remain?

[*The waters rise; Men fly in every di-
rection; many are overtaken by the
waves; the Chorus of Mortals dis-
perses in search of safety up the
mountains: Japhet remains upon a
rock, while the Ark floats towards him
in the distance.*

WERNER; OR, THE INHERITANCE:

A TRAGEDY

TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,

BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS, THIS TRAGEDY IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE

THE following drama is taken entirely from the 'German's Tale, Krunitzer', published many years ago in 'Lee's Canterbury Tales', written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself; but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think), I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names: but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts. The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.

PISA, February, 1822.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN				WOMEN	
WERNER.	IDENSTEIN.	HENRICK.	MEISTER.	JOSEPHINE.	
ULRIC.	GABOR.	ERIC.	RODOLPH.	IDA STRALENHEIM.	
STRALENHEIM.	FRITZ.	ARNHEIM.	LUDWIG.		

SCENE.—Partly on the frontier of Silesia, and partly in Slegendorf Castle, near Prague.

TIME.—The Close of the Thirty Years' War.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the Northern Frontier of Silesia—the Night tempestuous.*

WERNER and JOSEPHINE, his Wife.

Jos. My love, be calmer!

Wer. I am calm.

Jos. To me—

Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried, And no one walks a chamber like to ours With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.

Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,

And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;

But here!

Wer. 'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through

The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

Jos. Ah, no!

Wer. [smiling]. Why! wouldst thou have it so?

Jos. I would

Have it a healthful current.

Wer. Let it flow

Until 'tis spilt or check'd—how soon, I care not.

Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart?

Wer. All—all.

Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?

Wer. [approaching her slowly]. But for thee I had been—no matter what,

But much of good and evil; what I am,

Thou knowest; what I might or should
have been,
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[WERNER walks on abruptly, and then
approaches JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night
Perhaps affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas! 20
Thou know'st by sufferings more than
mine, my love!

In watching me.

Jos. To see thee well is much—
To see thee happy—

Wer. Where hast thou seen such?
Let me be wretched with the rest!

Jos. But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer
earth,

Which hath no chamber for them save
beneath

Her surface.

Wer. And that's not the worst: who
cares

For chambers? rest is all. The wretches
whom 30

Thou namest—ay, the wind howls round
them, and

The dull and dropping rain saps in their
bones

The creeping marrow. I have been a
soldier,

A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou
talk'st of. 35

Jos. And art thou not now shelter'd
from them all?

Wer. Yes. And from these alone.

Jos. And that is something.

Wer. True—to a peasant.

Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their
habits

Of early delicacy render more 40
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of
life?

Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is
not: we

Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee—but we have borne it.

Jos. Well?

Wer. Something beyond our outward
sufferings (though

These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever,
now.

When, but for this untoward sickness,
which 49

Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but
means,

And leaves us—no! this is beyond me!—
but

For this I had been happy—*thou* been
happy—

The splendour of my rank sustain'd—my
name—

My father's name—been still upheld; and,
more 55

Than those—

Jos. [abruptly]. My son—our son—
our Ulric,

Been clasp'd again in these long-empty
arms,

And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
Twelve years! he was but eight then:—
beautiful

He was, and beautiful he must be now,
My Ulric! my adored! 61

Wer. I have been full oft
The chase of Fortune; now she hath
o'eraken

My spirit where it cannot turn at bay,—
Sick, poor, and lonely.

Jos. Lonely! my dear husband?

Wer. Or worse—involving all I love,
in this 65

Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had
died,

And all been over in a nameless grave.
Jos. And I had not outlived thee; but
pray take

Comfort! We have struggled long; and
they who strive 69

With Fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal or cease to feel

Further. Take comfort,—we shall find
our boy.

Wer. We were in sight of him, of
everything

Which could bring compensation for past
sorrow—

And to be baffled thus!

Jos. We are not baffled. 75

Wer. Are we not penniless?

Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.

Wer. But I was born to wealth, and
rank, and power;

Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas!
abused them,

And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth: but for the
abuse 80

Long sufferings have atoned. My father's
death

Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so
long

Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time out-
stept me, 85

Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

Jos. Who knows? our son

May have return'd back to his grandsire,
and

Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

Wer. 'Tis hopeless. 90

Since his strange disappearance from my
father's,

Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his
course.

I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop
short 95

Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

Jos. I must hope better still,—at least
we have yet

Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

Wer. We should have done, but for
this fatal sickness; 101

More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole
solace:

Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend:—
How do I know he hath not track'd us
here? 106

Jos. He does not know thy person;
and his spies,

Who so long watch'd thee, have been left
at Hamburg.

Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind:
None hold us here for aught save what we
seem. 111

Wer. Save what we seem! save what
we are—sick beggars,

Even to our very hopes.—Ha! ha!

Jos. Alas!

That bitter laugh!

Wer. Who would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?

Who. In this garb, the heir of princely
lands? 116

Who. In this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? In this worn cheek
And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of
halls

Which daily feast a thousand vassals?

Jos. You 120

Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly
things,

My Werner! when you deign'd to choose
for bride

The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

Wer. An exile's daughter with an out-
cast son, 124

Were a fit marriage: but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born
for.

Your father's house was noble, though
decay'd;

And worthy by its birth to match with
ours.

Jos. Your father did not think so,
though 'twas noble;

But had my birth been all my claim to
match 130

With thee, I should have deem'd it what
it is.

Wer. And what is that in thine eyes?

Jos. All which it

Has done in our behalf,—nothing?

Wer. How,—nothing?

Jos. Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,

We had not felt our poverty but as 136

Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal
fathers,

Thou might'st have earn'd thy bread, as
thousands earn it;

Or, if that seem too humble, tried by
commerce, 140

Or other civic means, to amend thy
fortunes.

Wer. [ironically]. And been an Han-
seatic burgher? Excellent!

Jos. Whate'er thou might'st have
been, to me thou art

What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice; which chose thee,

knowing neither 145

Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought,
save thy sorrows:

While they last, let me comfort or divide
them:

When they end, let mine end with them,
or thee!

Wer. My better angel! Such I have
ever found thee;

This rashness, or this weakness of my
temper, 150

Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or
thine.

Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own
nature

In youth was such as to inmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,

Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught
to know 155

Myself,—to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth
spring,

My father barr'd me from my fathers'
house,

The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less

Than to behold my boy and my boy's
mother 161

Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved—exclusion; although
then

My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the Gorgon's round me.

[A loud knocking is heard.

Jos. Hark!

Wer. A knocking! 165

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour?
We have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer
still.

Well, I am prepared.

[*WERNER puts his hand into his bosom,
as if to search for some weapon.*]

Jos. Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door. It cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation:—
The very desert saves man from mankind.
[*She goes to the door.*]

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. A fair good evening to my fairer
hostess
And worthy—What's your name, my
friend?

Wer. Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

Iden. Not afraid? 175
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your
name,

By the face you put on it.

Wer. Better, sir!

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony:
what

Shall I say more? You have been a guest
this month 180

Here in the prince's palace—(to be sure,
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years—but 'tis still
a palace)—

I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer. My name is Werner. 185

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy
name,

As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust, 190
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i'the way of
business.

Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos. Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.
[*Aside to WERNER.*] Cannot you humour
the dull gossip till 195

We learn his purpose?

Iden. Well, I'm glad of that;
I thought so all along, such natural yearn-
ings

Play'd round my heart:—blood is not
water, cousin;

And so let's have some wine, and drink
unto

Our better acquaintance: relatives should
be 200
Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drank
enough already;

And if you have not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours: but this you know, or
should know:

You see I am poor, and sick, and will not
see

That I would be alone; but to your
business! 205

What brings you here?

Iden. Why, what should bring me
here?

Wer. I know not, though I think that
I could guess

That which will send you hence.

Jos. [*aside*]. Patience, dear Werner!

Iden. You don't know what has
happen'd, then?

Jos. How should we?

Iden. The river has o'erflow'd.

Jos. Alas! we have known 210
That to our sorrow for these five days;
since

It keeps us here.

Iden. But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would
cross

Against the stream and three postillions'
wishes,

Is drown'd below the ford, with five post-
horses, 215

A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

Jos. Poor creatures! are you sure?

Iden. Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet

We know not if his excellency's dead 219
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be;

But what is certain is, that he has
swallow'd

Enough of the Oder to have burst two
peasants;

And now a Saxon and Hungarian
traveller,

Who, at their proper peril, snatch'd him
from 225

The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as

It may turn out with the live or dead body.
Jos. And where will you receive him?

here, I hope,

If we can be of service—say the word.

Iden. Here? no; but in the prince's
own apartment, 231

As fits a noble guest:—'tis damp, no
doubt,

Not having been inhabited these twelve
years;

But then he comes from a much damper
place,

So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be
Still liable to cold—and if not, why 236

He'll be worse lodged to-morrow:
ne'ertheless,

I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst—that is,
In case he should survive.

Jos. Poor gentleman, 240
I hope he will, with all my heart.

Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name? My Josephine,
[*Aside to his wife.*
Retire: I'll sift this fool.

[*Exit JOSEPHINE.*
Iden. His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer; or if not, to put 246
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding
names?

Wer. True, true, I did so: you say well
and wisely.

Enter GABOR.

Gab. If I intrude, I crave—
Iden. Oh, no intrusion! 250
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at
home:

But where's his excellency? and how fares he?
Gab. Wetly and wearily, but out of
peril:

He paused to change his garments in a
cottage 255
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came
on hither),
And has almost recover'd from his drench-
ing.

He will be here anon.

Iden. What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter,
Conrad! 259

[*Gives directions to different servants
who enter.*

A nobleman sleeps here to-night—see that
All is in order in the damask chamber—
Keep up the stove—I will myself to the
cellar—

And Madame Idenstein (my consort,
stranger)

Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous
scant of this 265

Within the palace precincts, since his high-
ness

Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless?

Gab. Faith!
I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table,
after 270

His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I
mean

To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

Iden. But are you sure 275
His excellency—But his name: what is it?
Gab. I do not know.

Iden. And yet you saved his life.
Gad. I help'd my friend to do so.

Iden. Well, that's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not
know.

Gab. Not so; for there are some I
know so well, 280
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

Iden. Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be?

Gab. By my family,
Hungarian.

Iden. Which is call'd?

Gab. It matters little.

Iden. [*aside*]. I think that all the world
are grown anonymous,

Since no one cares to tell me what he's
call'd! 285

Pray, has his excellency a large suite?
Gab. Sufficient.

Iden. How many?
Gab. I did not count them.

We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage
window.

Iden. Well, what would I give to save
a great man! 290

No doubt you'll have a swingeing sum as
recompense.

Gab. Perhaps.

Iden. Now, how much do you reckon
on?

Gab. I have not yet put up myself to
sale:

In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer—a green
glass, 295

Wreath'd with rich grapes and Bacchanal
devices,

O'erflowing with the oldest of your
vintage:

For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drown'd (although I
own

It seems, of all deaths, the least likely, for
you), 300

I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my
friend,

And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

Iden. [*aside*]. I don't much like this
fellow—close and dry

He seems,—two things which suit me not;
however, 305

Wine he shall have; if that unlock him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN.*
Gab. [*to WERNER*]. This master of the
ceremonies is

The intendant of the palace, I presume:
'Tis a fine building, but decay'd.

SCENE I]

WERNER

Wer. The apartment
Design'd for him you rescued will be
found 311

In fitter order for a sickly guest.

Gab. I wonder then you occupied it
not,

For you seem delicate in health.

Wer. [quickly]. Sir!

Gab. Pray
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend
you? 315

Wer. Nothing: but we are strangers to
each other.

Gab. And that's the reason I would
have us less so:

I thought our bustling host without had
said

You were a chance and passing guest, the
counterpart

Of me and my companions.

Wer. Very true. 320

Gab. Then, as we never met before,
and never,

It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon
here

(At least to me) by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

Wer. Pray, pardon me; my health—

Gab. Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am
blunt
In bearing.

Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

Gab. In what service?
The Imperial?

Wer. [quickly, and then interrupting him-
self]. I commanded—no—I mean

I served; but it is many years ago, 331

When first Bohemia raised her banner
'gainst

The Austrian.

Gab. Well, that's over now, and
peace

Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts
adrift

To live as they best may: and, to say
truth, 335

Some take the shortest.

Wer. What is that?

Gab. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands

Of the late troops, who levy on the
country

Their maintenance: the Chatelains must
keep 340

Their castle walls—beyond them 'tis but
doubtful

Travel for your rich count or full-blown
baron.

My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

Wer. And I—nothing.

Gab. That's harder still. You say you
were a soldier. 345

Wer. I was.

Gab. You look one still. All soldiers
are

Or should be comrades, even though
enemies.

Our swords when drawn must cross, our
engines aim

(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but
when 349

A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep

The spark which lights the matchlock, we
are brethren.

You are poor and sickly—I am not rich,
but healthy;

I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this—wilt share it?

[GABOR pulls out his purse.

Wer. Who 355

Told you I was a beggar?

Gab. You yourself,

In saying you were a soldier during peace-
time.

Wer. [looking at him with suspicion].

You know me not?

Gab. I know no man, not even
Myself: how should I then know one I
ne'er

Beheld till half an hour since?

Wer. Sir, I thank you. 360

Your offer's noble were it to a friend,
And not unkind as to an unknown
stranger,

Though scarcely prudent; but no less I
thank you.

I am a beggar in all save his trade; 364

And when I beg of any one, it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what

Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.
[Exit WERNER.

Gab. [solus]. A goodly fellow by his
looks, though worn,

As most good fellows are, by pain or
pleasure, 369

Which tear life out of us before our time;
I scarce know which most quickly: but he
seems 371

To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday?—But here ap-
proaches

Our sage intendant, with the wine: how-
ever, 374

For the cup's sake I'll bear the cupbearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. 'Tis here! the supernaculum!
twenty years

Of age, if 'tis a day.

Gab. Which epoch makes

Young women and old wine; and 'tis great
pity,

Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.

Fill full—Here's to our hostess!—your fair wife!
Iden. Fair!—Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal

To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you Nevertheless.

Gab. Is not the lovely woman I met in the adjacent hall, who, with 385
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better

Beseem'd this palace in its brightest days (Though in a garb adapted to its present Abandonment), return'd my salutation—Is not the same your spouse?

Iden. I would she were! 390
But you're mistaken:—that's the stranger's wife.

Gab. And by her aspect she might be a prince's;
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains

Much beauty, and more majesty.

Iden. And that Is more than I can say for Madame 395
Idenstein,

At least in beauty: as for majesty, She has some of its properties which might Be spared—but never mind!

Gab. I don't. But who May be this stranger? He too hath a bear-

Above his outward fortunes.

Iden. There I differ. 400
He's poor as Job, and not so patient; but Who he may be, or what, or aught of him, Except his name (and that I only learn'd To-night), I know not.

Gab. But how came he here?
Iden. In a most miserable old caleche, About a month since, and immediately Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

Gab. Tender and true!—but why?
Iden. Why, what is life

Without a living? He has not a stiver.

Gab. In that case, I much wonder that a person 410

Of your apparent prudence should admit Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

Iden. That's true: but pity, as you know, does make

One's heart commit these follies; and besides, 414

They had some valuables left at that time, Which paid their way up to the present hour;

And so I thought they might as well be lodged

Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them

The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.

They served to air them, at the least as long 420

As they could pay for firewood.

Gab. Poor souls!

Iden. Ay,

Exceeding poor.

Gab. And yet unused to poverty, If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

Iden. Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to heaven itself.

Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey 425

For Werner.

Gab. Werner! I have heard the name: But it may be a feign'd one.

Iden. Like enough!

But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and

A blaze of torches from without. As sure As destiny, his excellency's come. 430

I must be at my post; will you not join me, To help him from his carriage, and present

Your humble duty at the door?

Gab. I dragg'd him From out that carriage when he would have given

His barony or county to repel 435
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.

He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,

Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,

All roaring 'Help!' but offering none; and as

For duty (as you call it)—I did mine then, Now do yours. Hence, and bow and cringe him here! 441

Iden. I cringe!—but I shall lose the opportunity—

Plague take it! he'll be here, and I not there! [Exit IDENSTEIN hastily.

Re-enter WERNER.

Wer. [to himself]. I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How

All sounds now jar me!

Still here! Is he not 445

[Perceiving GABOR.

A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore

The aspect of a secret enemy; For friends are slow at such.

Gab. Sir, you seem rapt; And yet the time is not akin to thought.

These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron, 451

Or count (or whatsoe'er this half drown'd noble

May be), for whom this desolate village and

Its lone inhabitants show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.

Iden. [without]. This way— 455
This way, your excellency:—have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decay'd; but if we had expected
So high a guest—Pray take my arm, my
lord!

*Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and
Attendants,—partly his own, and partly
Retainers of the Domain of which
IDENSTEIN is Intendant.*

Stral. I'll rest here a moment.

Iden. [to the servants]. Ho! a chair!
Instantly, knaves! 461

[STRALENHEIM sits down.

Wer. [aside]. 'Tis he!

Stral. I'm better now.

Who are these strangers?
Iden. Please you, my good lord,
One says he is no stranger.

Wer. [aloud and hastily]. Who says
that?

[They look at him with surprise.
Iden. Why, no one spoke of you, or to
you!—but

Here 's one his excellency may be pleased
To recognise. [Pointing to GABOR.

Gab. I seek not to disturb 466
His noble memory.

Stral. I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?

[Pointing to WERNER.
My state when I was succour'd must
excuse 470

My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.
Iden. He!—no, my lord! he rather
wants for rescue

Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dream'd to rise.

Stral. Methought
That there were two.

Gab. There were, in company;
But, in the service render'd to your lord-
ship

I needs must say but one, and he is absent.
The chief part of whatever aid was
render'd 479

Was his: it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do
not waste

Your thanks on me. I was but a glad
second

Unto a nobler principal.

Stral. Where is he?

An Atten. My lord, he tarried in the
cottage where 485

Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

Stral. Till

That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then—

Gab. I seek no more, and scarce
deserve

So much. My comrade may speak for
himself. 490

Stral. [fixing his eyes upon WERNER:
then aside].

It cannot be! and yet he must be look'd to.
'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still
have kept

Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave

At Hamburg those who would have
made assurance

If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and

parted 499
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood

May keep me prisoner here till—

[He pauses and looks at WERNER; then
resumes.

This man must
Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,

Would pass him by unknown. I must be
wary: 505

An error would spoil all.

Iden. Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

Stral. 'Tis past fatigue, which gives
my weigh'd-down spirit

An outward show of thought. I will to rest.
Iden. The prince's chamber is pre-
pared, with all 510

The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.

[Aside]. Somewhat tatter'd,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by
torchlight;

And that's enough for your right noble
blood

Of twenty quarters upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something
like one 516

Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

Stral. [rising and turning to GABOR].
Good night, good people! Sir, I
trust to-morrow

Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the mean time I crave your company
A moment in my chamber. 521

Gab. I attend you.

Stral. [after a few steps, pauses, and calls
WERNER]. Friend!

Wer. Sir!

Iden. Sir! Lord—oh Lord! Why
don't you say

His lordship, or his excellency? Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of
breeding;

WERNER

[ACT I.]

He hath not been accustom'd to admission
To such a presence. 526

Stral. [to IDENSTEIN]. Peace, intendant!

Iden. Oh!

I am dumb.

Stral. [to WERNER]. Have you been
long here?

Wer. Long?

Stral. I sought

An answer, not an echo.

Wer. You may seek

Both from the walls. I am not used to
answer

Those whom I know not.

Stral. Indeed! Ne'er the less, 530

You might reply with courtesy to what
Is ask'd in kindness.

Wer. When I know it such,
I will requite—that is, *reply*—in unison.

Stral. The intendant said you had
been detain'd by sickness—

If I could aid you—journeying the same
way? 535

Wer. [quickly]. I am not journeying
the same way.

Stral. How know ye

That, ere you know my route?

Wer. Because there is

But one way that the rich and poor must
tread

Together. You diverged from that dread
path

Some hours ago, and I some days: hence-
forth 540

Our roads must lie asunder, though they
tend

All to one home.

Stral. Your language is above

Your station.

Wer. [bitterly]. Is it?

Stral. Or, at least, beyond

Your garb.

Wer. 'Tis well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.

But, in a word, what would you with me?

Stral. [startled]. I?

Wer. Yes—you! You know me not,
and question me,

And wonder that I answer not—not know-
ing

My inquisitor. Explain what you would
have, 549

And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons
for reserve.

Wer. Many have such:—Have you
none?

Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
Thesame unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man

Who can have nought in common with
him.

Stral.

Sir,

I will not balk your humour, though un-
toward:

I only meant you service—but good night!
Intendant, show the way! [To GABOR].

Sir, you will with me?

[*Exeunt STRALENHEIM and Attendants,*
IDENSTEIN and GABOR.

Wer. [solus]. 'Tis he! I am taken in
the toils. Before 560

I quitted Hamburg, Giulio, his late
steward,

Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an
order

From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitznar (such the name I then bore)

when 564

I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom—till I left

Its walls—fool that I was to quit them!
But

I deem'd this humble garb, and route
obscure,

Had baffled the slow hounds in their
pursuit.

What's to be done? He knows me not by
person; 570

Nor could aught, save the eye of appre-
hension,

Have recognised *him*, after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in

Our youth. But those about him! Now
I can

Divine the frankness of the Hungarian,
who 575

No doubt is a mere tool and spy of
Stralenheim's,

To sound and to secure me. Without
means!

Sick, poor—begirt too with the flooding
rivers, 578

Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes

Of overpowering peril, w th men's lives,—
How can I hope? An hour ago methought

My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis
such,

The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I'm detected,—on the very eve

Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me

still

In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN and FRITZ in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you, 'tis impossible.

Fritz. It must
Be tried, however; and if one express

Fail, you must send on others, till the
answer 591

Arrives from Frankfort, from the com-
mandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

Iden. The baron is retired to rest?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an
easy chair 596
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has
order'd

He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before
An hour is past I'll do my best to serve
him. 600

Fritz. Remember! [*Exit FRITZ.*]

Iden. The devil take these great
men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here
must I

Rouse up some half a dozen shivering
vassals

From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river
towards 605

Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own
experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-
feeling:

But no, 'it must,' and there's an end. How
now?

Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes—he's dozing, 610
And seems to like that none should sleep
besides.

Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
But I must not lose time: Good night!

Wer. 'To Frankfort!' [*Exit.*]
So, so, it thickens! Ay, 'the com-
mandant.' 615

This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No
doubt

He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress.—Sooner than that
This— 621

[*WERNER looks around, and snatches up
a knife lying on a table in a recess.*]

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark,—footsteps! How do I know that
Stralenheim

Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?

That he suspects me's certain. I'm alone;
He with a numerous train. I weak;

he strong 626
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.

I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;

He full-blown with his titles, which
impose 630

Still further on these obscure petty
burghers

Than they could do elsewhere. Hark!
nearer still!

I'll to the secret passage, which communi-
cates

With the—No! all is silent—'twas my
fancy!— 634

Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder:—I must hush my
soul

Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage

I wot of: it will serve me as a den 639
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[*WERNER draws a panel, and exit, closing
it after him.*]

Enter GABOR and JOSEPHINE.

Gab. Where is your husband?

Jos. Here, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these
rooms

Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant. 644

Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on

The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. Alas!
What can there be in common with the
proud

And wealthy baron, and the unknown
Werner?

Gab. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how 650
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you

saved?

Gab. I help'd to save him, as in peril;
but

I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles,
and 655

Their thousand modes of trampling on the
poor.

I have proved them; and my spirit boils
up when

I find them practising against the weak:—
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of 660
Your good intentions.

Gab. Is he so suspicious?

Jos. He was not once; but time and
troubles have

Made him what you beheld.

Gab. I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and

With its own weight impedes more than
protects. 665

Good night! I trust to meet with him at
daybreak. [*Exit GABOR.*]

*Re-enter IDENSTEIN and some Peasants.
JOSEPHINE retires up the Hall.*

First Peasant. But if I'm drown'd?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for
as much,

I doubt not.

Second Peasant. But our wives and
families?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they
are, and may 670

Be better.

Third Peasant. I have neither, and will
venture.

Iden. That's right. A gallant carle,
and fit to be

A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard—if you
succeed:

And you shall have besides, in sparkling
coin, 675

Two thalers.

Third Peasant. No more!

Iden. Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?

I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a
treasure.

Do not five hundred thousand heroes
daily 680

Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one
thaler?

When had you half the sum?

Third Peasant. Never—but ne'er
The less I must have three.

Iden. Have you forgot

Whose vassal you were born, knave?

Third Peasant. No—the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

Iden. Sirrah! in the prince's 685
Absence, I am sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connexion;—'Cousin Iden-
stein!

(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen
villains.

And so, you villains! troop—march—
march, I say; 689

And if a single dog's ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder—look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a
drum,

Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities.—Away, ye earth-worms!

[Exit, driving them out.]

Jos. [coming forward]. I fain would
shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull
spot, 700

The dimmest in the district's map, exist

The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still—the pride of
rank

In servitude, o'er something still more ser-
vile;

And vice in misery affecting still 705
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of
being!

In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and mer-
chants,

Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing
valleys 710

Made poverty more cheerful, where each
herb

Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which
makes glad

The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded,
leaving 715

His warmth behind in memory of his
beams)

Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe,
less

Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd
purple.

But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,

Searching the shivering vassal through
his rags, 721

To wring his soul—as the bleak elements
His form. And 'tis to be amongst these
sovereigns

My husband pants! and such his pride of
birth— 724

That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father born in a humble state could nerve

His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;

But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson.

Father! 730

May thy long-tried and now rewarded
spirit

Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!

What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be?
and thus?

*Enter WERNER hastily, with the knife in his
hand, by the secret panel, which he closes
hurriedly after him.*

Wer. [not at first recognising her]. Dis-
cover'd! then I'll stab—[recognis-
ing her].

Ah! Josephine, 735

Why art thou not at rest?

Jos. What rest? My God!

What doth this mean?

Wer. [showing a rouleau]. Here's gold—
gold, Josephine,

Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

Jos. And how obtain'd?—that knife!
Wer. 'Tis bloodless—yet.
 Away—we must to our chamber.
Jos. But whence comest thou? 740
Wer. Ask not! but let us think where
 we shall go—
 This—this will make us way—[*showing
 the gold*]—I'll fit them now.
Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of
 dishonour.
Wer. Dishonour!
Jos. I have said it.
Wer. Let us hence:
 'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass
 here. 745
Jos. And not the worst, I hope.
Wer. Hope! I make sure.
 But let us to our chamber.
Jos. Yet one question—
 What hast thou done?
Wer. [*fiercely*]. Left one thing undone,
 which
 Had made all well: let me not think of it!
 Away! 749
Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee!
 [Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE I.—A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings!
 honest doings!
 A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
 Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was
 heard of.
Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats
 despoil'd
 The mice of a few shreds of tapestry. 5
Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see
 this day!
 The honour of our city's gone for ever.
Fritz. Well, but now to discover the
 delinquent:
 The baron is determined not to lose
 This sum without a search.
Iden. And so am I. 10
Fritz. But whom do you suspect?
Iden. Suspect! all people
 Without — within — above — below —
 Heaven help me!
Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the
 chamber?
Iden. None whatsoever.
Fritz. Are you sure of that?
Iden. Certain. I have lived and served
 here since my birth, 15
 And if there were such, must have heard
 of such,
 Or seen it.
Fritz. Then it must be some one who
 Had access to the antechamber.
Iden. Doubtless.
Fritz. The man call'd *Werner's* poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser. 19
 But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
 By which there's no communication with
 The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
 Besides, I bade him 'good night' in the
 hall,
 Almost a mile off, and which only leads
 To his own apartment, about the same
 time 25
 When this burglarious, larcenous felony
 Appears to have been committed.
Fritz. There's another,
 The stranger——
Iden. The Hungarian?
Fritz. He who help'd
 To fish the baron from the Oder. Not
 Unlikely. But, hold—might it not have
 been 30
 One of the suite?
Fritz. How? *We*, sir!
Iden. No—not you,
 But some of the inferior knaves. You say
 The baron was asleep in the great chair—
 The velvet chair—in his embroider'd
 nightgown;
 His toilet spread before him, and upon it
 A cabinet with letters, papers, and 36
 Several rouleaux of gold; of which one
 only
 Has disappear'd:—the door unbolted,
 with
 No difficult access to any.
Fritz. Good sir,
 Be not so quick! the honour of the corps
 Which forms the baron's household's
 unimpeach'd 41
 From steward to scullion, save in the fair
 way
 Of peculation; such as in accompts,
 Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
 Where all men take their prey; as also in
 Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
 Purveying feasts, and understanding with
 The honest trades who furnish noble
 masters;
 But for your petty, picking, downright
 thievery, 49
 We scorn it as we do board-wages. Then
 Had one of our folks done it, he would not
 Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
 His neck for one rouleau, but have
 swoop'd all;
 Also the cabinet, if portable.
Iden. There is some sense in that——
Fritz. No, sir, be sure 55
 'Twas none of our corps; but some petty,
 trivial
 Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
 The only question is—Who else could have
 Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?
Iden. You don't mean me?
Fritz. No, sir; I honour more 60
 Your talents——

Iden. And my principles, I hope.
Fritz. Of course. But to the point:
 What's to be done?
Iden. Nothing—but there's a good
 deal to be said.
 We'll offer a reward; move heaven and
 earth,
 And the police (though there's none
 nearer than ⁶⁵
 Frankfurt); post notices in manuscript
 (For we've no printer); and set by my
 clerk
 To read them (for few can, save he and I);
 We'll send out villains to strip beggars,
 and
 Search empty pockets; also to arrest ⁷⁰
 All gypsies, and ill-clothed and sallow
 people.
 Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the
 culprit;
 And for the baron's gold—if 'tis not
 found,
 At least he shall have the full satisfaction
 Of melting twice its substance in the
 raising ⁷⁵
 The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchemy
 For your Lord's losses!
Fritz. He hath found a better.
Iden. Where?
Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
 The late Count Siegendorf, his distant
 kinsman,
 Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my
 lord ⁸⁰
 Is on his way to take possession.
Iden. Was there
 No heir?
Fritz. Oh, yes; but he has disappear'd
 Long from the world's eye, and perhaps
 the world.
 A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
 For the last twenty years: for whom his
 sire ⁸⁵
 Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, there-
 fore,
 If living, he must chew the husks still.
 But
 The baron would find means to silence
 him,
 Were he to re-appear: he's politic,
 And has much influence with a certain
 court. ⁹⁰
Iden. He's fortunate.
Fritz. 'Tis true, there is a grandson,
 Whom the late count reclaim'd from his
 son's hands,
 And educated as his heir; but then
 His birth is doubtful.
Iden. How so?
Fritz. His sire made
 A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of
 marriage, ⁹⁵
 With an Italian exile's dark-eyed
 daughter:
 Noble, they say, too; but no match for
 such
 A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
 Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er
 be brought
 To see the parents, though he took the
 son. ¹⁰⁰
Iden. If he's a lad of mettle, he may
 yet
 Dispute your claim, and weave a web that
 may
 Puzzle your baron to unravel.
Fritz. Why,
 For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
 He forms a happy mixture of his sire ¹⁰⁵
 And grandsire's qualities,—impetuous as
 The former, and deep as the latter; but
 The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
 Some months ago.
Iden. The devil he did!
Fritz. Why, yes:
 It must have been at his suggestion, at
 An hour so critical as was the eve ¹¹¹
 Of the old man's death, whose heart was
 broken by it.
Iden. Was there no cause assign'd?
Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
 And none, perhaps, the true one. Some
 averr'd ¹¹⁴
 It was to seek his parents; some because
 The old man held his spirit in so strictly
 (But that could scarce be, for he doted on
 him):
 A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
 But peace being made soon after his de-
 parture,
 He might have since return'd, were that
 the motive;
 A fourth set charitably have surmised,
 As there was something strange and mystic
 in him,
 That in the wild exuberance of his nature
 He had join'd the black bands, who lay
 waste Lusatia,
 The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
 Since the last years of war had dwindled
 into ¹²⁶
 A kind of general condottiero system
 Of bandit warfare; each troop with its
 chief,
 And all against mankind.
Iden. That cannot be,
 A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
 To risk his life and honours with dis-
 banded ¹³¹
 Soldiers and desperadoes!
Fritz. Heaven best knows!
 But there are human natures so allied
 Unto the savage love of enterprise,
 That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
 I've heard that nothing can reclaim your
 Indian, ¹³⁶
 Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
 Were fed on milk and honey. After all,

Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and
 Gustavus,
 Your Banner, and your Torstenson and
 Weimar, 140
 Were but the same thing upon a grand
 scale;
 And now that they are gone, and peace
 proclaim'd,
 They who would follow the same pastime
 must
 Pursue it on their own account. Here
 comes 144
 The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
 Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
 But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
 Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM and ULRIC.

Stral. Since you have refused
 All compensation, gentle stranger, save
 Inadequate thanks, you almost check even
 them, 150
 Making me feel the worthlessness of
 words,
 And blush at my own barren gratitude,
 They seem so niggardly, compared with
 what
 Your courteous courage did in my
 behalf—

Ulr. I pray you press the theme no
 further.

Stral. But 155
 Can I not serve you? You are young, and
 of
 That mould which throws out heroes; fair
 in favour;

Brave, I know, by my living now to say so;
 And, doubtlessly, with such a form and
 heart,

Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
 As ardently for glory as you dared 161
 An obscure death to save an unknown
 stranger,

In an as perilous, but opposite, element.
 You are made for the service: I have
 served;

Have rank by birth and soldiership, and
 friends, 165

Who shall be yours. 'Tis true this pause of
 peace

Favours such views at present scantily;
 But 'twill not last, men's spirits are too
 stirring;

And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
 Is but a petty war, as the time shows us
 In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
 War will reclaim his own; and, in the
 mean time,

You might obtain a post, which would
 insure

A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail
 not 174

To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
 I stand well with the Elector; in Bohemia,

Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
 Upon its frontier.

Ulr. You perceive my garb
 Is Saxon, and of course my service due
 To my own sovereign. If I must decline
 Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which
 Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury!
 I owe my life to you, and you refuse
 The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
 To heap more obligations on me, till
 I bow beneath them. 186

Ulr. You shall say so when
 I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not—
 You are nobly born?

Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I
 ask your name?

Ulr. Ulríc.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulr. When I'm worthy of it, 190
 I'll answer you.

Stral. [aside]. Most probably an
 Austrian,
 Whom these unsettled times forbid to
 boast

His lineage on these wild and dangerous
 frontiers,

Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.
 [Aloud to FRITZ and IDENSTEIN.

So, sirs! how have ye sped in your re-
 searches? 195

Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.

Stral. Then
 I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

Iden. Humph!—not exactly.

Stral. Or at least suspected?

Iden. Oh! for that matter, very much
 suspected.

Stral. Who may he be?

Iden. Why, don't you know, my
 lord? 200

Stral. How should I? I was fast asleep.

Iden. And so
 Was I, and that's the cause I know no
 more

Than does your excellency.

Stral. Dolt!

Iden. Why, if

Your lordship, being robb'd, don't
 recognise

The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd,
 identify 205

The thief among so many? In the crowd,
 May it please your excellency, your thief
 looks

Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
 'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon,

That wise men know your felon by his
 features; 210

But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
 Whether he be found criminal or no,

His face shall be so.

Stral. [to FRITZ]. Prithee, Fritz, inform me

What hath been done to trace the fellow?

Fritz. Faith!

My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture. 215

Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me

Just now materially), I needs would find

The villain out of public motives; for

So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep

Through my attendants, and so many

And lighted chambers, on my rest, and

The gold before my scarce-closed eyes,

would soon

Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

Iden. True:

If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

Ulr. What is all this?

Stral. You join'd us but this morning,

And have not heard that I was robb'd last

night. 226

Ulr. Some rumour of it reach'd me as

I pass'd

The outer chambers of the palace, but

I know no further.

Stral. It is a strange business;

The intendant can inform you of the facts.

Iden. Most willingly. You see—

Stral. [Impatiently]. Defer your tale,

Till certain of the hearer's patience.

Iden. That

Can only be approved by proofs. You

Stral. [again interrupting him, and

addressing ULRIC]. In short, I was

asleep upon my chair, 234

My cabinet before me, with some gold

Upon it (more than I much like to lose,

Though in part only): some ingenious

person

Contrived to glide through all my own

attendants,

Besides those of the place, and bore away

A hundred golden ducats, which to find

I would be fain, and there's an end.

Perhaps 241

You (as I still am rather faint) would add

To yesterday's great obligation, this,

Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid

these men

(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering

it? 245

Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss

of time

[To IDENSTEIN]. Come hither, mynheer!

Iden. But so much haste bodes

Right little speed, and—

Ulr. Standing motionless

None; so let's march; we'll talk as we go

on.

Iden. But—

Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you. 250

Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

Fritz. Hence!

Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

[Exit with IDENSTEIN and FRITZ.]

Stral. [solus]. A stalwart, active,

soldier-looking stripling,

Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,

And with a brow of thought beyond his

years 256

When in repose, till his eye kindles up

In answering yours. I wish I could engage

him:

I have need of some such spirits near me

now,

For this inheritance is worth a struggle.

And though I am not the man to yield

without one, 261

Neither are they who now rise up between

me

And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a

bold one;

But he hath play'd the truant in some hour

Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to 265

Champion his claims. That's well. The

father, whom

For years I've track'd, as does the blood-

hound, never

In sight, but constantly in scent, had put

me

To fault; but here I have him, and that's

better.

It must be he! All circumstance proclaims

it; 270

And careless voices, knowing not the

cause

Of my inquiries, still confirm it.—Yes,

The man, his bearing, and the mystery

Of his arrival, and the 'ime; the account,

too,

The intendant gave (for I have not beheld

her) 275

Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;

Besides the antipathy with which we met,

As snakes and lions shrink back from each

other

By secret instinct that both must be foes

Deadly, without being natural prey to

either; 280

All—all—confirm it to my mind. How-

ever,

We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours

The order comes from Frankfort, if these

waters

Rise not the higher (and the weather

favours

Their quick abatement), and I'll have

him safe 285

Within a dungeon, where he may avouch

His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
(Save for the actual loss) is lucky also; He's poor, and that's suspicious—he's unknown,²⁹⁰
And that's defenceless.—True, we have no proofs
Of guilt,—but what hath he of innocence? Were he a man indifferent to my prospects, In other bearings, I should rather lay The inculpation on the Hungarian, who Hath something which I like not; and alone²⁹⁶
Of all around, except the intendant, and The prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fare you?

Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when they³⁰⁰
Have supp'd and slumber'd, no great matter how—
And you, my lord?

Stral. Better in rest than purse: Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

Gab. I heard Of your late loss; but 'tis a trifle to One of your order.

Stral. You would hardly think so, Were the loss yours.

Gab. I never had so much (At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not

Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you. Your couriers are turn'd back—I have outstripp'd them,³⁰⁹

In my return.
Stral. You!—Why?

Gab. I went at daybreak, To watch for the abatement of the river, As being anxious to resume my journey. Your messengers were all check'd like myself;

And, seeing the case hopeless, I await The current's pleasure.³¹⁵

Stral. Would the dogs were in it! Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?

I order'd this at all risks.

Gab. Could you order The Oder to divide, as Moses did The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood Of the swollen stream), and be obey'd, perhaps³²⁰

They might have ventured.

Stral. I must see to it: The knaves! the slaves!—but they shall smart for this. [*Exit STRALENHEIM.*]

Gab. [solus]. There goes my noble, feudal, self-will'd baron!

Epitome of what brave chivalry The preux chevaliers of the good old times Have left us. Yesterday he would have given³²⁶

His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer, His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air

As would have fill'd a bladder, while he lay Gurgling and foaming halfway through the window³³⁰

Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance;

And now he storms at half a dozen wretches

Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:

'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them

To hazard at his pleasure. Oh, thou world!

Thou art indeed a melancholy jest!
[*Exit GABOR.*]

SCENE II.—*The Apartment of WERNER, in the Palace.*

Enter JOSEPHINE and ULRIC.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!

My Utric!—my beloved!—can it be— After twelve years?

Ulr. My dearest mother! Yes!

My dream is realised—how beautiful!— How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive⁵

A mother's thanks! a mother's tears of joy! This is indeed thy work!—At such an hour, too,

He comes not only as a son, but saviour.
Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double

What I now feel, and lighten from my heart¹⁰

A part of the long debt of duty, not Of love (for that was ne'er withheld)—forgive me!

This long delay was not my fault.

Jos. I know it, But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt

If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from¹⁵ My memory by this oblivious transport!— My son!

Enter WERNER.

Wer. What have we here,—more strangers?

Jos. No! Look upon him! What do you see?

Wer. A stripling, For the first time—

Ulr. [kneeling]. For twelve long years, my father!

Wer. Oh, God!
Jos. He faints!
Wer. No—I am better now— 20
Ulric! [Embraces him].
Ulric. My father, Siegendorf!
Wer. [starting]. Hush! boy—
 The walls may hear that name!
Ulric. What then?
Wer. Why, then—
 But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
 I must be known here but as Werner.
 Come!
 Come to my arms, again! Why, thou
 look'st all 25
 I should have been, and was not.
 Josephine!
 Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
 But, had I seen that form amid ten
 thousand
 Youth of the choicest, my heart would
 have chosen
 This for my son!
Ulric. And yet you knew me not! 30
Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my
 soul
 Which makes me look on all men with an
 eye
 That only knows the evil at first glance.
Ulric. My memory served me far more
 fondly: I
 Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times
 in 35
 The proud and princely halls of—(I'll not
 name them,
 As you say that 'tis perilous)—but i' the
 pomp
 Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
 To the Bohemian mountains many a
 sunset,
 And wept to see another day go down
 O'er thee and me, with those huge hills
 between us. 41
 They shall not part us more.
Wer. I know not that.
 Are you aware my father is no more?
Ulric. Oh, heavens! I left him in a green
 old age,
 And looking like the oak, worn, but still
 steady 45
 Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
 Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three
 months since.
Wer. Why did you leave him?
Jos. [embracing ULRIC]. Can you ask
 that question?
 Is he not here?
Wer. True; he hath sought his
 parents,
 And found them; but oh! how, and in
 what state! 50
Ulric. All shall be better'd. What we
 have to do
 Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
 Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless

Your father has disposed in such a sort
 Of his broad lands as to make mine the
 foremost, 55
 So that I must prefer my claim for form:
 But I trust better, and that all is yours.
Wer. Have you not heard of Stralen-
 heim?
Ulric. I saved
 His life but yesterday; he's here.
Wer. You saved
 The serpent who will sting us all!
Ulric. You speak 60
 Riddles: what is this Stralenheim to us?
Wer. Everything. One who claims
 our father's lands:
 Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.
Ulric. I never heard his name till now.
 The count,
 Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman,
 who, 65
 If his own line should fail, might be
 remotely
 Involved in the succession; but his titles
 Were never named before me—and what
 then?
 His right must yield to ours.
Wer. Ay, if at Prague;
 But here he is all-powerful; and has
 spread 70
 Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
 He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
 By favour.
Ulric. Doth he personally know you?
Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at
 my person,
 As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,
 But owe my temporary liberty 76
 To his uncertainty.
Ulric. I think you wrong him
 (Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralen-
 heim
 Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
 He owes me something both for past and
 present. 80
 I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
 He hath been plunder'd too, since he came
 hither:
 Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
 Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd
 him:
 I have pledged myself to do so; and the
 business 85
 Which brought me here was chiefly that:
 but I
 Have found, in searching for another's
 dress,
 My own whole treasure—you, my
 parents!
Wer. [agitatedly]. Who
 Taught you to mouth that name of
 'villain'?
Ulric. What
 More noble name belongs to common
 thieves? 90

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand
an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?

Ulr. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his
deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought
and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult
me? ⁹⁵

Ulr. I named a villain. What is there
in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Everything!
That ruffian is thy father!

Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not—and yet!—[*her voice*
falters].

Ulr. [*starts, looks earnestly at WERNER*
and then says slowly,] And you
avow it?

Wer. Ulric, before you dare despise
your father, ¹⁰⁰
Learn to divine and judge his actions.

Young,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's
lap,

Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait—(not
long,

It cometh like the night, and quickly)—
Wait!— ¹⁰⁵
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted
—till

Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your
cabin;

Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow—then rise, but
not

From sleep, and judge! Should that day
e'er arrive— ¹¹⁰
Should you see then the serpent, who hath
coil'd

Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your
path,

With but his folds between your steps and
happiness,

When *he*, who lives but to tear from you
name, ¹¹⁵
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor—midnight for
your mantle—

The bare knife in your hand, and earth
asleep,

Even to your deadliest foe; and he as
'twere

Inviting death, by looking like it, while
His death alone can save you:—Thank
your God! ¹²¹

If then, like me, content with petty
plunder,
You turn aside—I did so.

Ulr. But—

Wer. [*abruptly*]. Hear me!
I will not brook a human voice—scarce
dare ¹²⁴

Listen to my own (if that be human still)—
Hear me! you do not know this man—I do.
He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave;

but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtily. My worst foe, *Stralen-*
heim, ¹³⁰

Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd
within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!

An instant—a mere motion—the least
impulse—

Had swept him and all fears of mine from
earth.

He was within my power—my knife was
raised— ¹³⁵
Withdrawn—and I'm in his:—are you
not so?

Who tells you that he knows you *not*?
Who says

He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a
dungeon? [*He pauses.*]

Ulr. Proceed—proceed!
Wer. *Me* he hath ever known, ¹⁴⁰
And hunted through each change of
time—name—fortune—

And why not you? Are you more versed
in men?

He wound snares round me; flung along
my path

Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would
have spurn'd

Even from my presence; but, in spurning
now, ¹⁴⁵
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric!—Ulric!—there are
crimes

Made venial by the occasion, and tempta-
tions
Which nature cannot master or forbear.

Ulr. [*who looks first at him, and then at*
JOSEPHINE]. My mother!

Wer. Ah! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike ¹⁵¹
Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulr. But stay!
[*WERNER rushes out of the chamber.*]

Jos. [*to ULRIC*]. Follow him not, until
this storm of passion
Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well
for him,

I had not follow'd?
Ulr. I obey you, mother, ¹⁵⁵
Although reluctantly. My first act shall
not

Be one of disobedience.
Jos. Oh! he is good!
Condemn him not from his own mouth,
but trust

To me, who have borne so much with him,
and for him, 159

That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulr. These then are but my father's
principles?

My mother thinks not with him?

Jos. Nor doth he

Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of
grief

Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulr. Explain to me 165

More clearly, then, these claims of Stralen-
heim,

That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least

To extricate you from your present perils.
I pledge myself to accomplish this—but

would 170

I had arrived a few hours sooner!

Jos. Ay!

Hadst thou but done so!

*Enter GABOR and IDENSTEIN, with
Attendants.*

Gab. [to *ULRIC*]. I have sought you,
comrade.

So this is my reward!

Ulr. What do you mean?

Gab. 'Sdeath! have I lived to these
years, and for this!

[To *IDENSTEIN*]. But for your age and
folly, I would—

Iden. Help! 175

Hands off! Touch an intendant!

Gab. Do not think

I'll honour you so much as save your
throat

From the Ravenstone by choking you
myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite: but
there are

Those who have greater need of it than
me. 180

Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling,

Gab. At once, then,

The baron has been robbed, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix

His kind suspicions—me! whom he ne'er
saw

Till yester evening.

Iden. Wouldst have me suspect 185

My own acquaintances? You have to
learn

That I keep better company.

Gab. You shall

Keep the best shortly, and the last for all
men,

The worms! you hound of malice!

[*GABOR seizes on him.*

Ulr. [interfering]. Nay, no violence;

He's old, unarm'd—be temperate, *Gabor!*

Gab. [letting go *IDENSTEIN*]. True:

I am a fool to lose myself because 191

Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulr. [to *IDENSTEIN*]. How

Fare you?

Iden. Help!

Ulr. I have help'd you.

Iden. Kill him! then

I'll say so.

Gab. I am calm—live on!

Iden. That's more

Than you shall do, if there be judge or
judgment 195

In Germany. The baron shall decide!

Gab. Does he abet you in your
accusation?

Iden. Does he not?

Gab. Then next time let him go sink

Ere I go hang for snatching him from
drowning.

But here he comes!

Enter STRALENHEIM.

Gab. [goes up to him]. My noble lord,
I'm here! 200

Stral. Well, sir!

Gab. Have you aught with me?

Stral. What should I

Have with you?

Gab. You know best, if yesterday's

Flood has not wash'd away your memory;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,

In phrases not equivocal, by yon 205

Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber:—is the charge your own or

his?

Stral. I accuse no man.

Gab. Then you acquit me, baron?

Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or
to acquit,

Or scarcely to suspect.

Gab. But you at least 210

Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am
insulted—

Oppress'd here by these menials, and I
look

To you for remedy—teach them their
duty!

To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught; but, in one word, if I 215

Have an accuser, let it be a man

Worthy to be so of a man like me.

I am your equal.

Stral. You!

Gab. Ay, sir; and, for

Aught that you know, superior; but
proceed—

I do not ask for hints, and surmises, 220

And circumstance, and proof: I know
enough

Of what I have done for you, and what
you owe me,

To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of

Your gold. I also know, that were I even

The villain I am deem'd, the service
render'd 226

So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through
shame,

Such as would leave your scutcheon but a
blank.

But this is nothing: I demand of you 230
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no
more,

And never thought to have ask'd so much.

Stral. This tone 235
May be of innocence.

Gab. 'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stral. You
Are hot, sir.

Gab. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their
master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I
found him in 240

Your company.

Gab. We found *you* in the Oder,
Would we had left you there!

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.

Gab. I've earned them; but might
have earn'd more from others,

Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stral. Ulric! you know this man?

Gab. No more than you do 245
If he avouches not my honour.

Ulric. I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connexion led me, honour.

Stral. Then
I'm satisfied.

Gab. [ironically]. Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration 250
More than in mine?

Stral. I merely said that *I*
Was satisfied—not that you are absolved.

Gab. Again! Am I accused or no?

Stral. Go to!

You wax too insolent. If circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or inno-
cence? 257

Gab. My lord, my lord, this is mere
cozenage,

A vile equivocation; you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around
you— 260

You looks a voice—your frowns a
sentence; you

Are practising your power on me—
because

You have it; but beware! you know not
whom

You strive to tread on.

Stral. Threat'st thou?

Gab. Not so much 264
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury.
And I retort it with an open warning.

Stral. As you have said, 'tis true I owe
you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay
yourself.

Gab. Not with your gold.

Stral. With bootless insolence.

[To his Attendants and IDENSTEIN.
You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good
morrow! 271

[Exit STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and
Attendants.

Gab. [following]. I'll after him and—
Ulric. [stopping him]. Not a step.

Gab. Who shall
Oppose me?

Ulric. Your own reason, with a
moment's
Thought.

Gab. Must I bear this?

Ulric. Pshaw! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves—the highest cannot temper
Satan, 276

Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silkworm cast
his skin—

And shrink you from a few sharp sneers
and words? 280

Gab. Must I bear to be deem'd a thief?
If 'twere

A bandit of the woods, I could have borne
it—

There's something daring in it—but to
steal

The moneys of a slumbering man!—

Ulric. It seems, then,

You are not guilty.

Gab. Do I hear aright? 285
You too!

Ulric. I merely ask'd a simple question.

Gab. If the judge ask'd me, I would
answer 'No'—

To you I answer thus. [He draws.

Ulric. [drawing]. With all my heart!

Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help!—

Oh, God! here's murder!

[Exit JOSEPHINE, shrieking.

GABOR and ULRIC fight. GABOR is dis-
armed just as STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE,
IDENSTEIN, &c., re-enter.

Jos. Oh! glorious heaven! He's safe!

Stral. [to JOSEPHINE]. Who's safe?

Jos. My—

Ulric. [interrupting her with a stern look,
and turning afterwards to STRALEN-
HEIM].

Both! 290
Here's no great harm done.

Stral. What hath caused all this?
Ulr. You, baron, I believe; but as the effect

Is harmless, let it not disturb you.—
Gabor!

There is your sword; and when you bare it next,

Let it not be against your friends.

[*ULRIC pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to GABOR.*

Gab. I thank you 295
Less for my life than for your counsel.

Stral. These
Brawls must end here.

Gab. [*taking his sword*]. They shall.

You've wrong'd me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I would

The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's 300

Absurd insinuations—ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Entail will last him longer than his lands.—

But I may fit him yet:—you have vanquish'd me.

I was the fool of passion to conceive 305
That I could cope with you, whom I had

Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However—but in friendship.

[*Exit GABOR.*

Stral. I will brook
No more! This outrage following upon his insults, 310

Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.

Ulric, you are not hurt?—

Ulr. Not even by a scratch.

Stral. [*to IDENSTEIN*]. Intendant! take
your measures to secure 315

Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort,

The instant that the waters have abated.
Iden. Secure him! He hath got his sword again—

And seems to know the use on't; 'tis his trade, 320

Belike;—I'm a civilian.

Stral. Fool! are not

Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!

Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you!

Stral. I must be
Obey'd. No words!

Iden. Well, if it must be so— 325

March, vassals! I'm your leader, and will bring

The rear up: a wise general never should
Expose his precious life—on which all rests.

I like that article of war.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*

Stral. Come hither,
Ulr. what does that woman here? Oh! now 330

I recognise her, 'tis the stranger's wife
Whom they name 'Werner.'

Ulr. 'Tis his name.

Stral. Indeed!

Is not your husband visible, fair dame?—

Jos. Who seeks him?

Stral. No one—for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself Alone.

Ulr. I will retire with you.

Jos. Not so: 336

You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.

[*Aside to ULRIC, as she goes out*]. O Ulric!
have a care—

Remember what depends on a rash word!

Ulr. [*to JOSEPHINE*]. Fear not!—

[*Exit JOSEPHINE.*

Stral. Ulric, I think that I may trust
you; 340

You saved my life—and acts like these
beget

Unbounded confidence.

Ulr. Say on.

Stral. Mysterious
And long-engender'd circumstances (not

To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious—perhaps fatal to me. 345

Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

Stral. No—this 'Werner'—
With the false name and habit.

Ulr. How can this be?

He is the poorest of the poor—and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'a in his hollow eye:

The man is helpless.

Stral. He is—'tis no matter;— 350

But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here—and much
That is not here—confirm my apprehension),

He must be made secure ere twelve hours
further. 354

Ulr. And what have I to do with this?

Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend,
(I have the authority to do so by

An order of the house of Brandenburg),
For a fit escort—but this cursed flood

Bars all access, and may do for some
hours. 360

Ulr. It is abating.

Stral. That is well.

Ulr. But how

Am I concern'd?

Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued.—Keep your eye on
him! ³⁶⁵

The man avoids me, knows that I now
know him.—

Watch him!—as you would watch the
wild boar when

He makes against you in the hunter's
gap—

Like him he must be spear'd.

Ulr. Why so?

Stral. He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance! ³⁷⁰
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulr. I hope so.

Stral. It is the richest of the rich
Bohemia,

Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so
near

The strongest city, Prague, that fire and
sword

Have skim'd it lightly: so that now,
besides ³⁷⁵

Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms far and
near

Made deserts.

Ulr. You describe it faithfully.

Stral. Ay—could you see it, you
would say so—but, ³⁷⁹
As I have said, you shall.

Ulr. I accept the omen.

Stral. Then claim a recompense from
it and me,

Such as *both* may make worthy your
acceptance

And services to me and mine for ever.

Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable
wretch—

This way-worn stranger—stands between
you and ³⁸⁵

This Paradise?—(As Adam did between
The devil and his)—[*Aside*].

Stral. He doth.

Ulr. Hath he no right?

Stral. Right! none. A disinherited
prodigal,

Who for these twenty years disgraced his
lineage ³⁸⁹

In all his acts—but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching

burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of
Jews.

Ulr. He has a wife, then?

Stral. You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen
the woman ³⁹⁴

He calls his wife.

Ulr. Is she not so?

Stral. No more
Than he's your father:—an Italian girl,

The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same
Werner.

Ulr. They are childless, then?

Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man—the grandsire (as
old age ⁴⁰⁰

Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chillily downward to the grave:

But the imp stands not in my path—he
has fled,

No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible

To stand.—Why do you smile?

Ulr. At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp—a child
Of doubtful birth—can startle a grandee!

Stral. All's to be fear'd, where all is to
be gain'd.

Ulr. True; and aught done to save or
to obtain it. ⁴¹⁰

Stral. You have harp'd the very string
next to my heart.

I may depend upon you?

Ulr. 'Twere too late

To doubt it.

Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the
man

Is pitiful)—he is a wretch, as likely ⁴¹⁵
To have robb'd me as the fellow more

suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against

him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine; and, to say

truth, ⁴¹⁹
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an

act:
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once—though too rash.

Ulr. And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till

They knock the brains out first—which
makes them heirs, ⁴²⁵

Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought,
can lose nothing,

Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a be-
quest—

No more.

Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this

man,
And let me know his slightest movement
towards ⁴³⁰

Concealment or escape?

Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more
than I

Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulr. Such is my intention. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret passage leads.*

Enter WERNER and GABOR.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale: if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well—
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter?—wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert—

Gab. Or 6
The wounded lion his cool cave. Me-
thinks
You rather look like one would turn at
bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer. Ah!
Gab. I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do 10
The same myself. But will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you—and poor like
you—

Disgraced—
Wer. [abruptly]. Who told you that I
was disgraced?

Gab. No one; nor did I say you were
so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but 15
I said I was so—and would add, with
truth,
As undeservedly as you.

Wer. Again!
As I?

Gab. Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You
don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?

Wer. No, no—I cannot. 20
Gab. Why that's my heart of honour!
yon young gallant—

Your miserly intendant and dense noble—
All—all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst clothed and least named
amongst them;

Although, were Momus' lattice in your
breasts, 25
My soul might brook to open it more
widely

Than theirs: but thus it is—you poor and
helpless—

Both still more than myself.

Wer. How knew you that?
Gab. You're right: I ask for shelter
at the hand

Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to
have proved 31

The wholesome bitterness of life, know
well,

By sympathy, that all the outspread gold

Of the New World the Spaniard boasts
about,

Could never tempt the man who knows
its worth 35

Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its
power,

Because I feel it) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean?

Gab. Just what I say; I thought my
speech was plain; 40

You are no thief—nor I—and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damn'd world, sir.

Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should
know best), 44

Therefore I'll stick by this—as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.

It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as

The dove did, trusting that they have
abated. 50

Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?

Gab. There was

At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe.

Gab. Are you

In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gab. That I know by long practice.

Will you not

Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty? 55

Gab. No—you don't look a leech for
that disorder;

I meant my peril only: you've a roof,

And I have none; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly; for how should such a

wretch as I

Have gold?

Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the
truth on't, 60

Although I almost wish you had the
baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate?

Gab. What?

Wer. Are you aware

To whom you speak?

Gab. No; and I am not used

Greatly to care. [*A noise heard without.*]

But hark! they come!

Wer. Who come?

Gab. The intendant and his man-

hounds after me: 65

I'd face them—but it were in vain to expect

Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall

I go?

But show me any place. I do assure you,

If there be faith in man, I am most guilt-

less:

Think if it were your own case!

Wer. [*aside*]. Oh, just God! 70
Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?

Gab. I see you're moved; and it shows
well in you:

I may live to requite it.

Wer. Are you not

A spy of Stralenheim's?

Gab. Not I! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you? 75

Although, I recollect, his frequent
question

About you and your spouse might lead to
some

Suspicion; but you best know—what—
and why.

I am his deadliest foe.

Wer. You?

Gab. After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him, I am his enemy: 81

If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gab. But how?

Wer. [*showing the panel*]. There is a
secret spring:

Remember, I discover'd it by chance,

And used it but for safety.

Gab. Open it, 85
And I will use it for the same.

Wer. I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding
walls

(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness),

And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither; you must not

advance: 91

Give me your word.

Gab. It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness
through

A Gothic labyrinth of unknown wind-
ings?

Wer. Yes, but who knows to what
place it may lead? 95

I know not—(mark you!)—but who
knows it might not

Lead even into the chamber of your foe?
So strangely were contrived these galleries

By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements

Than his next neighbour. You must not
advance: 101

Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never pass'd them), I'll not

answer

For what you may be led to.

Gab. But I will.

A thousand thanks!

Wer. You'll find the spring more
obvious 105

On the other side; and, when you would
return,

It yields to the least touch.

Gab. I'll in—farewell!

[*GABOR goes in by the secret panel.*
Wer. [*solus*]. What have I done? Alas!

what *had* I done

Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man,

Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my
own— 111

They come! to seek elsewhere what is
before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have
vanish'd then

Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow

Casements, through which the sunset
streams like sunrise 116

On long pearl-colour'd beards and
crimson crosses,

And gilded crossiers, and cross'd arms,
and cowls,

And helms, and twisted armour, and long
swords,

All the fantastic furniture of windows
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits,

whose 121

Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind pro-
claims

As frail as any other life or glory.

He's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain. 125

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search

Of him who robb'd the baron.

Wer. Are you sure

You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you

Stand there: but where's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him 130

Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?

Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,

To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be
I have a question or two for yourself

Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t'other. 135

Wer. You had best begin
Your inquisition now: I may not be
So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.

Wer. Insolent! 140

Said you not that he was not here?

Iden. Yes, one;
But there's another whom he tracks more
keenly,

And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But
come!

Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.
[Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.]

Wer. In what 145
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater.

Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with
blood. 150

Enter ULRIC.

Ulr. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is't not dangerous?

Ulr. No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more—
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it: 155
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulr. I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them, as an
unarm'd carle 160

Would, though with naked limbs, were
the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hew'd for
bread.

Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught
so:

We'll overfly or rend them.

Wer. Show me how?

Ulr. Can you not guess?

Wer. I cannot.

Ulr. That is strange. 165
Came the thought ne'er into your mind
last night?

Wer. I understand you not.

Ulr. Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to
change

The topic—

Wer. You mean to pursue it, as
'Tis of our safety.

Ulr. Right; I stand corrected. 170
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.

The waters are abating; a few hours
Will bring his summon'd myrmidons
from Frankfort,

When you will be a prisoner, perhaps
worse, 175

And I an outcast, bastardised by practice
Of this same baron to make way for him.

Wer. And now your remedy! I
thought to escape

By means of this accursed gold; but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt

For motto, not the mintage of the state;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own
begirt

With hissing snakes, which curl around
my temples, 184

And cry to all beholders, Lo! a villain!

Ulr. You must not use it, at least now;
but take

This ring. [He gives WERNER a jewel.]

Wer. A gem! It was my father's!

Ulr. And

As such is now your own. With this you
must

Bribe the intendant for his old caleche
And horses to pursue your route at sun-
rise, 190

Together with my mother.

Wer. And leave you,

So lately found, in peril too?

Ulr. Fear nothing!

The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all
doubt.

The waters only lie in flood between 195
This burgh and Frankfort; so far's in our
favour.

The route on to Bohemia, though encum-
ber'd,

Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you're safe.

Wer. My noble boy!

Ulr. Hush! hush! no transports: we'll
indulge in them

In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold!

Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will
answer thus 205

A double purpose. Stralenheim lost
gold—

No jewel; therefore it could not be his;
And then the man who was possess of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting

The baron's coin, when he could thus
convert 210

This ring to more than Stralenheim has
lost

By his last night's slumber. Be not over
timid

In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer. I will follow

In all things your direction.

Ulr. I would have 215

Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more

By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

Wer. My guardian angel!

This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence? 221

Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.

I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoice my
father.

Wer. To part no more!

Ulr. I know not that; but at 225
The least we'll meet again once more.

Wer. My boy!
My friend! my only child, and sole pre-
server!

Oh, do not hate me!

Ulr. Hate my father!

Wer. Ay,
My father hated me. Why not my son?

Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wer. Scorpions
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this
guise 231

Thou canst not know me, I am not myself;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulr. I'll wait!

In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wer. I see it, and I feel it; yet I feel
Further—that you despise me.

Ulr. Wherefore should I?

Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation?

Ulr. No! 238

I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not now. Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,
At secret war with that of Stralenheim:
All we have now to think of is to baffle
Him. I have shown one way.

Wer. The only one, 245
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd himself and father's safety in
One day.

Ulr. You shall be safe; let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in
Bohemia

Disturb your right, or mine, if once we
were 250

Admitted to our lands?

Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now; although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the
strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

Ulr. Blood! 'tis 254
A word of many meanings; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing—
And so it should be, when the same in
blood

(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest. 260

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulr. That may be—
And should, perhaps—and yet—but get
ye ready;

You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the intendant: sound him with
the gem; 264

'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze too, from the bottom, as the lead
doth

With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through
these shoals.

The freight is rich, so heave the line in
time! 270

Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your
hand,

My father!—

Wer. Let me embrace thee!

Ulr. We may be

Observed: subdue your nature to the
hour!

Keep off from me as from your foe!

Wer. Accursed
Be he who is the stifling cause which
smothers 275

The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts;
At such an hour too!

Ulr. Yes, curse—it will ease you!
Here is the intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you
caught 279

The rogue?

Iden. No, faith!

Ulr. Well, there are plenty more:
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulr. Your great men
Must be answer'd on the instant, as the
bound 285

Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'Tis well they have horses, too; for, if they
had not,

I fear that men must draw their chariots,
as

They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he?

Ulr. An old Bohemian—an imperial
gipsy. 290

Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the
same,
For they pass by both names. And was
he one?

Ulr. I've heard so; but I must take
leave. Intendant,

Your servant!—Werner [to WERNER
slightly], if that be your name,

Yours. [Exit ULRIC.]

Iden. A well-spoken pretty-faced
young man! 295

And prettily behaved! He knows his
station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That's well—
That's very well. You also know your
place, too.
And yet I don't know that I know your
place.

Wer. [showing the ring]. Would this
assist your knowledge?

Iden. How!—What!—Eh?
A jewel.

Wer. 'Tis your own on one condition.
Iden. Mine!—Name it!

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 'tis 305
A family ring.

Iden. A family!—yours!—a gem!
I'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me,
An hour ere daybreak, with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real? Let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

Wer. Come, I'll trust you: 310
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was
born above

My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it: this is the true
breeding

Of gentle blood!

Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily 315
My journey hence.

Iden. So then you are the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

Wer. I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter—'tis
To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 'tis not
my business;

Besides, I never could obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who
would raise 324

The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward—

But this!—another look!

Wer. Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou loadstar
of 331

The Soul! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling
needles!

Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which,
sitting

High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who
sweats 336

Beneath the crown which makes his head
ache, like

Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it
lustre!

Shalt thou bemoine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist!— 340

A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

Wer. Call me Werner still;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee! thou art the
spirit 345

Of whom I long have dream'd in a low
garb.—

But come, I'll serve thee: thou shalt be as
free

As air, despite the waters; let us hence:
I'll show thee I am honest—(oh, thou
jewel!)

Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such
means 350

Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee.—Let me gaze
again!

I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburg skill'd in precious stones.

How many
Carats may it weigh?—Come, Werner, I
will wing thee. [Exeunt. 355

SCENE II.—STRALENHEIM'S Chamber.

STRALENHEIM and FRITZ.

Fritz. All's ready, my good lord!

Stral. I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say

To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for
slumber,

Sits on me as a cloud along the sky, 5
Which will not let the sunbeams through,
nor yet

Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between
man

And man, an everlasting mist:—I will
Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well! 10
Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear?
Stral. I know not why, and therefore
do fear more,

Because an undescribable—but 'tis
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for
last night's 15

Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young
Saxon

Who saved your life. I think they call him
'Ulric.

Stral. You *think!* you supercilious
 slave! what right
 Have you to *tax your* memory, which
 should be
 Quick, proud, and happy to retain the
name
 Of him who saved your master, as a litany
 Whose daily repetition marks your
 duty?—
 Get hence! 'You *think,*' indeed! you, who
 stood still
 Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst
 I
 Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
 The roaring torrent, and restored me to
 Thank him—and despise you. 'You
think!' and scarce
 Can recollect his name! I will not waste
 More words on you. Call me *betimes.*
Fritz. Good night!
 I trust to-morrow will restore your lord-
 ship
 To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—*The secret Passage.*

Gab. [solus]. Four—
 Five—six hours have I counted, like the
 guard
 Of outposts on the never-merry clock;
 That hollow tongue of time, which, even
 when
 It sounds for joy, takes something from
 enjoyment
 With every clang. 'Tis a perpetual knell,
 Though for a marriage feast it rings: each
 stroke
 Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
 Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
 In the grave of Possession; while the knoll
 Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
 To triple time in the son's ear.
 I'm cold—
 I'm dark;—I've blown my fingers—num-
 ber'd o'er
 And o'er my steps—and knock'd my head
 against
 Some fifty buttresses—and roused the
 rats
 And bats in general insurrection, till
 Their cursed pattering feet and whirling
 wings
 Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
 A light! It is at distance (if I can
 Measure in darkness distance): but it
 blinks
 As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
 The inhibited direction: I must on,
 Nevertheless, from curiosity.
 A distant lamp-light is an incident
 In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead
 me
 To nothing that may tempt me! Else—
 Heaven aid me

To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
 Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
 Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
 Contain no longer. Softly: mighty well!
 That corner's turn'd—so—ah! no:—
 right! it draws
 Nearer. Here is a darksome angle—so,
 That's weather'd.—Let me pause.—
 Suppose it leads
 Into some greater danger than that which
 I have escaped—no matter, 'tis a new one;
 And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
 Wear more magnetic aspects:—I will on,
 And be it where it may—I have my
 dagger,
 Which may protect me at a pinch.—Burn
 still,
 Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis*
fatuus!
 My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp!—So! so!
 He hears my invocation, and fails not.
 [*The scene closes.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Garden.*

Enter WERNER.

Wer. I could not sleep—and now the
 hour's at hand;
 All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;
 And station'd in the outskirts of the town,
 Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
 Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars be-
 gin
 To pale in heaven; and for the last time I
 Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never,
 never
 Shall I forget them. Here I came most
 poor,
 But not dishonour'd: and I leave them
 with
 A stain,—if not upon my name, yet in
 My heart!—a never-dying canker-worm,
 Which all the coming splendour of the
 lands,
 And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
 Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
 Some means of restitution, which would
 ease
 My soul in part: but how, without dis-
 covery?—
 It must be done, however; and I'll pause
 Upon the method the first hour of safety.
 The madness of my misery led to this
 Base infamy; repentance must retrieve it:
 I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
 My spirit, though he would grasp all of
 mine;
 Lands, freedom, life,—and yet he sleeps
 as soundly,
 Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous
 curtains
 Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
 Such as when—Hark! what noise is
 that? Again!

The branches shake; and some loose
stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC leaps down from the terrace.

Ulric! ever welcome!
Thrice welcome now! this filial—

Ulric. Stop! Before
We approach, tell me—

Wer. Why look you so?

Ulric. Do I

Behold my father, or—

Wer. What?

Ulric. An assassin?

Wer. Insane or insolent!

Ulric. Reply, sir, as
You prize your life, or mine!

Wer. To what must I
Answer?

Ulric. Are you or are you not the

Of Stralenheim?

Wer. I never was as yet
The murderer of any man. What mean you?

Ulric. Did not you this night (as the
night before)

Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber?

and—

[ULRIC pauses.

Wer. Proceed.

Ulric. Died he not by your hand?

Wer. Great God! 40

Ulric. You are innocent, then! my
father's innocent!

Embrace me! Yes,—your tone—your
look—yes, yes,—

Yet say so.

Wer. If e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts—if e'er they glared at

moment through 46

The irritation of my oppressed spirit—
May heaven be shut for ever from my

hopes,

As from mine eyes!

Ulric. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as
'tis hateful!— 50

But what have I to do with this?

Ulric. No bolt

Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own house-

hold

Have been alarm'd; but as the intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care 55

Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse

me,

If nature—
Wer. Oh, my boy! what unknown
woes

Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

Ulric. My father! I acquit you! 60
But will the world do so? will even the

judge,

If—But you must away this instant.

Wer.

No!
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

Ulric.

Yet
You had no guests—no visitors—no life

Breathing around you, save my mother's?

Wer.

Ah! 65

The Hungarian!

Ulric.

He is gone! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.

Wer.

No; I hid him in that very

Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

Ulric.

There I'll find him.

Wer. It is too late; he had left the

palace ere

I quitted it. I found the secret panel 70
Open, and the doors which lead from that

hall

Which masks it: I but thought he had
snatch'd the silent

And favourable moment to escape

The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

Ulric.

You reclosed 75

The panel?

Wer.

Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided

peril)

At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk

Of a discovery.

Ulric.

You are sure you closed it? 80

Wer.

Certain.

Ulric.

That's well; but had been better,
if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for—

[He pauses.

Wer.

Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and
deserve it;

But not—

Ulric.

No, father; do not speak of this:
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great

ones. 86

Why would you shelter this man?
Wer. Could I shun it?

A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime: a victim to my safety,

Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he

needed 91

Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have in such circumstances thrust him

forth.

Ulric.

And like the wolf he hath repaid
you. But
It is too late to ponder thus:—you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace the murderer, if 'tis possible. 97

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch

Suspicion: two new victims in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and—

Ulr. Who seems? Who else 101
Can be so?

Wer. Not I, though just now you
doubted—

You, my son!—doubted—

Ulr. And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

Wer. Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such*
crime), I, 105

Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt.

Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to
accuse

Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be, 110
Because 'tis dusky.

Ulr. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not,
or knew

But to oppress? You must not stand the
hazard.

Away!—I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace—he also is a partner in 116
Your flight—moreover—

Wer. Fly! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd

as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

Ulr. Pshaw! leave anything
Except our fathers' sovereignty and castles,
For which you have so long panted, and
in vain! 121

What name? You have *no name*, since that
you bear

Is feign'd.

Wer. Most true: but still I would not
have it

Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of
men— 125

Besides, the search—

Ulr. I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows
you here

As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 'tis *but suspicion*, and he is

A fool: his folly shall have such employ-
ment, 130

Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reach'd this village) are all in
abeyance

With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled
them. 136

Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such*—without lands,

influence,
Save what hath perish'd with him. Few
prolong

A week beyond their funeral rites their
sway 140

O'er men, unless by relatives, whose
interest

Is roused: such is not here the case; he
died

Alone, unknown,—a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a
scutcheon,

Is all he'll have, or wants. If I discover
The assassin, 'twill be well—if not, believe
me, 146

None else; though all the full-fed train of
menials

May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),
Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.

Hence! hence! I must not hear your an-
swer.—Look! 151

The stars are almost faded, and the grey
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.

You shall not answer:—Pardon me that I
Am peremptory; 'tis your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son.—Let's
call my mother! 156

Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me: I'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed.

We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf—once
more 161

Our banners shall be glorious! Think of
that

Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with
them—Hence!

And may your age be happy!—I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's
speed be with you! 166

Wer. This counsel's safe—but is it
honourable?

Ulr. To save a father is a child's chief
honour. [Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—A Gothic Hall in the Castle of
Siegendorf, near Prague.

Enter ERIC and HENRICK, Retainers of the
Count.

Eric. So, better times are come at last;
to these

Old walls new masters and high wassail—
both

A long desideratum.
Hen. Yes, for masters,

It might be unto those who long for
novelty,

Though made by a new grave: but as for
wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf main-
tain'd

His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.

Eric. Why
For the mere cup and trencher, we no
doubt

Fared passing well; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces
season

The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this*
does?

Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as
he's bounteous,
And we all love him.

Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal:
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the
present!

Then his brave son, Count Ulric—there's
a knight!

Pity the wars are o'er!

Hen. Why so?
Eric. Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

Hen. He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Eric. That's not a faithful vassal's
likeness.

Hen. But
Perhaps a true one.

Eric. Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes, but yet offends not? in the
field,

Who like him with his spear in hand,
when, gnashing

His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for
the thicket?

Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or
wears

A sword like him? Whose plume nods
knightlier?

Hen. No one's, I grant you. Do not
fear, if war

Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

Eric. What do you mean?
Hen. You can't deny his train of
followers

(But few our native fellow-vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As—

[Pauses.

Eric. What?

Hen. The war (you love so
much) leaves living.

Like other parents, she spoils her worst
children.

Eric. Nonsense! they are all brave
iron-visaged fellows,

Such as old Tilly loved.

Hen. And who loved Tilly?

Ask that at Magdebourg—or for that
matter

Wallenstein either;—they are gone to—
Eric. Rest!

But what beyond, 'tis not ours to pro-
nounce.

Hen. I wish they had left us something
of their rest:

The country (nominally now at peace)
Is over-run with—God knows who: they
fly

By night, and disappear with sunrise; but
Leave us no less desolation, nay, even
more,

Than the most open warfare.

Eric. But Count Ulric—
What has all this to do with him?

Hen. With him!
He—might prevent it. As you say he's
fond

Of war, why makes he it not on those
marauders?

Eric. You'd better ask himself.
Hen. I would as soon

Ask the lion why he laps not milk.
Eric. And here he comes!

Hen. The devil! you'll hold your
tongue?

Eric. Why do you turn so pale?
Hen. 'Tis nothing—but

Be silent.
Eric. I will, upon what you have said.

Hen. I assure you I meant nothing,—
a mere sport

Of words, no more; besides, had it been
otherwise,

He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress;

And she, no doubt, will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars

Have given all natures, and most unto
those

Who were born in them, and bred up
upon

The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it
were,

With blood even at their baptism. Prithee,
peace

On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC and RODOLPH.

Good morrow, Count.

Ulr. Good morrow, worthy Henrick.

Eric. Is

All ready for the chase?

Eric. The dogs are order'd 75
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks
promising.

Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

Ulr. The dun,
Walstein.

Eric. I fear he scarcely has
recover'd 80

The toils of Monday: 'twas a noble chase:
You spear'd four with your own hand.

Ulr. True, good Eric;
I had forgotten—let it be the grey, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fort-
night.

Eric. He shall be straight caparison'd.
How many 85

Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

Ulr. I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse. *[Exit ERIC.]*

Rodolph! My lord!
Ulr. The news

Is awkward from the——
[RODOLPH points to HENRICK.]

How now, Henrick? why
Loiter you here?

Hen. For your commands, my lord.
Ulr. Go to my father, and present my
duty, 95

And learn if he would aught with me
before

I mount. *[Exit HENRICK.]*

Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and

'Tis rumour'd that the column sent
against them 95

Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.

Rod. Best wait for further and more
sure advices.

Ulr. I mean it—and indeed it could
not well

Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

Rod. It will be difficult 100
To excuse your absence to the count your
father.

Ulr. Yes, but the unsettled state of our
domain

In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are

Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty
men 105

Whom Wolfe leads—keep the forests on
your route:

You know it well?

Rod. As well as on that night
When we——

Ulr. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success:

And when you have join'd, give Rosen-
berg this letter. *[Gives a letter.]*

Add further, that I have sent this slight
addition 111

To our force with you and Wolfe, as
herald of

My coming, though I could but spare
them ill

At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,

Until this marriage, and its feasts and
fooleries, 116

Are rung out with its peal of nuptial non-
sense.

Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida?
Ulr. Why,

I do so—but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious
years, 120

So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 'twere that of Venus:—but I

love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and
solely.

Rod. And constantly?

Ulr. I think so; for I love
Nought else.—But I have not the time to
pause 125

Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great
things

We have to do ere long. Speed! speed!
good Rodolph!

Rod. On my return, however, I shall
find

The Baroness Ida lost in Countess
Siegendorf?

Ulr. Perhaps: my father wishes it; and
sooth 130

'Tis no bad policy: this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once

Unites the future and destroys the past.

Rod. Adieu.

Ulr. Yet hold—we had better
keep together

Until the chase begins; then draw thou
off, 135

And do as I have said.

Rod. I will. But to
Return—'twas a most kind act in the
count

Your father to send up to Konigsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and

To hail her as his daughter.

Ulr. Wondrous kind! 140
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

Rod. The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

Ulr. How should I know?
Rod. I have heard it whisper'd there
was something strange

About his death—and even the place of
it 145

Is scarcely known.

Ulr. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

Rod. He
Has left no testament—no farewell words?

Ulr. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

Rod. Ah! here's the lady Ida. 150

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.

Ulr. You are early, my sweet cousin!

Ida. Not too early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.

Why do you call me 'cousin'?

Ulr. [smiling]. Are we not so?

Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name;
methinks 154

It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.

Ulr. [starting]. Blood!

Ida. Why does yours start from your
cheeks?

Ulr. Ay! doth it?

Ida. It doth—but no! it rushes like a
torrent
Even to your brow again.

Ulr. [recovering himself]. And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you,
sweet cousin! 161

Ida. 'Cousin' again.

Ulr. Nay, then, I'll call you sister.

Ida. I like that name still worse.—
Would we had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!

Ulr. [gloomily]. Would we never had!

Ida. Oh, heavens! and can you wish
that!

Ulr. Dearest Ida! 165
Did I not echo your own wish?

Ida. Yes, Ulric,
But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be
Sister or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

Ulr. You shall be 170
All—all—

Ida. And you to me are so already;
But I can wait.

Ulr. Dear Ida!

Ida. Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none
else's—

Indeed I have none else left, since my poor
father— [She pauses.]

Ulr. You have mine—you have me.

Ida. Dear Ulric, how I wish 175
My father could but view my happiness,
Which wants but this!

Ulr. Indeed!

Ida. You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other:
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative); but
under 180

This grave exterior—Would you had
known each other!

Had such as you been near him on his
journey,

He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

Ulr. Who says that?

Ida. What?

Ulr. That he died alone.

Ida. The general rumour 185
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd: that fever was most
deadly

Which swept them all away.

Ulr. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida. Alas! what is a menial to a death-
bed, 190

When the dim eye rolls vainly round for
what

It loves?—They say he died of a fever.

Ulr. Say!

It was so.

Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulr. All dreams are false.

Ida. And yet I see him as
I see you.

Ulr. Where?

Ida. In sleep—I see him lie 195
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised
knife

Beside him.

Ulr. But you do not see his face!

Ida. [looking at him]. No! Oh, my
God! do you?

Ulr. Why do you ask?

Ida. Because you look as if you saw a
murderer!

Ulr. [agitatedly]. Ida, this is mere child-
ishness; your weakness 200

Infects me, to my shame: but as all feelings
Of yours are common to me, it affects me.

Prithee, sweet child, change—

Ida. Child, indeed! I have

Full fifteen summers! [A bugle sounds.]

Rod. Hark, my lord, the bugle!

Ida. [peevishly to RODOLPH]. Why need
you tell him that? Can he not hear it

Without your echo?

Rod. Pardon me, fair baroness!

Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you
earn it

By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to-day.

Rod. You will not,

Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulr. I must not now 210

Forgo it.

Ida. But you shall!

Ulr. Shall!

Ida. Yes, or be

No true knight.—Come, dear Ulric!
yield to me

In this, for this one day: the day looks
heavy,

And you are turn'd so pale and ill.

Ulr. You jest.
Ida. Indeed I do not:—ask of
 Rodolph.
Rod. Truly, 215
 My lord, within this quarter of an hour
 You have changed more than e'er I saw
 you change
 In years.
Ulr. 'Tis nothing; but if 'twere, the air
 Would soon restore me. I'm the true
 chameleon,
 And live but on the atmosphere; your
 feasts 220
 In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse
 not
 My spirit—I'm a forester and breather
 Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
 The eagle loves.
Ida. Except his prey, I hope.
Ulr. Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase,
 and I 225
 Will bring you six boars' heads for
 trophies home.
Ida. And will you not stay, then?
 You shall not go!
 Come! I will sing to you.
Ulr. Ida, you scarcely
 Will make a soldier's wife.
Ida. I do not wish
 To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
 And you will live in peace on your
 domains. 231
Enter WERNER as COUNT SIEGENDORF.
Ulr. My father, I salute you, and it
 grieves me
 With such brief greeting.—You have
 heard our bugle;
 The vassals wait.
Sieg. So let them.—You forget
 To-morrow is the appointed festival 235
 In Prague for peace restored. You are apt
 to follow
 The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
 Permit you to return to-day, or if
 Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-
 morrow
 The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.
Ulr. You, count, 240
 Will well supply the place of both—I am
 not
 A lover of these pageantries.
Sieg. No, Ulric:
 It were not well that you alone of all
 Our young nobility—
Ida. And far the noblest
 In aspect and demeanour.
Sieg. [to IDA]. True, dear child, 245
 Though somewhat frankly said for a fair
 damsel.—
 But, Ulric, recollect too our position,
 So lately reinstated in our honours.
 Believe me, 'twould be mark'd in any
 house,
 But most in *ours*, that ONE should be
 found wanting 250
 At such a time and place. Besides, the
 Heaven
 Which gave us back our own, in the same
 moment
 It spread its peace o'er all, hath double
 claims
 On us for thanksgiving: first, for our
 country;
 And next, that we are here to share its
 blessings. 255
Ulr. [aside]. Devout, too! Well, sir,
 I obey at once.
 [Then aloud to a Servant]. Ludwig,
 dismiss the train without!
 [Exit LUDWIG.]
Ida. And so
 You yield at once to him what I for hours
 Might supplicate in vain.
Sieg. [smiling]. You are not jealous
 Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel! who 260
 Would sanction disobedience against all
 Except thyself? But fear not; thou shalt
 rule him
 Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.
Ida. But I should like to govern now.
Sieg. You shall.
 Your *harp*, which by the way awaits you
 with 265
 The countess in her chamber. She com-
 plains
 That you are a sad truant to your music:
 She attends you.
Ida. Then good morrow, my kind
 kinsmen!
 Ulric, you'll come and hear me?
Ulr. By and by.
Ida. Be sure I'll sound it better than
 your bugles; 270
 Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
 I'll play you King Gustavus' march.
Ulr. And why not
 Old Tilly's?
Ida. Not that monster's! I should
 think
 My harp-strings rang with groans, and
 not with music,
 Could aught of *his* sound on it:—but
 come quickly; 275
 Your mother will be eager to receive you.
 [Exit.]
Sieg. Ulric, I wish to speak with you
 alone.
Ulr. My time's your vassal.—
 [Aside to RODOLPH]. Rodolph, hence!
 and do
 As I directed: and by his best speed
 And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.
Rod. Count Siegendorf, command
 you aught? I am bound 281
 Upon a journey past the frontier.
Sieg. [starts]. Ah!—
 Where? on what frontier?

Rod. The Silesian, on—
My way—[*Aside to ULRIC*].—Where shall I say?

Ulr. [*aside to RODOLPH*]. To Ham-
burgh.

[*Aside to himself*.] That
Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

Rod. Count, to Hamburgh. 286

Sieg. [*agitated*]. Hamburgh! No, I
have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!
[*Exit RODOLPH*.]

Sieg. Ulr. this man, who has just
departed, is 290
One of those strange companions whom I
fain

Would reason with you on.

Ulr. My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

Sieg. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of
him. 295

Ulr. So they will do of most men.
Even the monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's
slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has
made
Great and ungrateful.

Sieg. If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this
Rodolph: 300

They say he is leagued with the 'black
bands' who still
Ravage the frontier.

Ulr. And will you believe
The world?

Sieg. In this case—yes.

Ulr. In any case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

Sieg. Son! 305
I understand you: you refer to—but
My destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take

Ulr. you have seen to what the passions
led me: 310

Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quench'd them not—twenty thousand
more, perchance,

Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which
Might date for years, did Anguish make
the dial)

May not obliterate or expiate 315
The madness and dishonour of an instant.

Ulr. be warn'd by a father!—I was not
By mine, and you behold me!

Ulr. I behold

The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
By those he rules and those he ranks with.

Sieg. Ah! 321

Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while
I fear

For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness
for me—

But if my son's is cold!—

Ulr. Who dare say that? 325

Sieg. None else but I, who see it—*feel*
it—keener

Than would your adversary, who dared
say so,

Your sabre in his heart! But mine
survives

The wound.

Ulr. You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling: how should it be
so, 330

After twelve years' divorcement from my
parents?

Sieg. And did not I too pass those
twelve torn years

In a like absence? But 'tis vain to urge
you—

Nature was never call'd back by remon-
strance.

Let's change the theme. I wish you to
consider 335

That these young violent nobles of high
name,

But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all
Rumour

Reports be true), with whom thou con-
sortest,

Will lead thee—

Ulr. [*impatiently*]. I'll be led by no
man.

Sieg. Nor 339

Be leader of such, I would hope: at once
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou shouldst wed the lady Ida—
more

As thou appear'st to love her.

Ulr. I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to 345

Unite with Hecate—can a son say more?
Sieg. He says too much in saying this.

It is not

The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,

Or act so carelessly, in that which is 350
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness,

(For Glory's pillow is but restless, if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some
strong bias,

Some master fiend is in thy service, to
Misrule the mortal who believes him

slave, 355

And makes his every thought sub-
servient; else

Thou'dst say at once—'I love young Ida,
and
Will wed her;' or, 'I love her not, and
all
The powers of earth shall never make me.'

—So

Would I have answer'd.

Ulr. Sir, you wed for love. 360

Sieg. I did, and it has been my only
refuge

In many miseries.

Ulr. Which miseries

Had never been but for this love-match.

Sieg. Still

Against your age and nature! Who at
twenty

E'er answer'd thus till now?

Ulr. Did you not warn me 365

Against your own example?

Sieg. Boyish sophist!

In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?

Ulr. What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her?

Sieg. As far

As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.

She's young—all-beautiful—adores you
—is 371

Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot
paint,

And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which Philosophy might barter

Wisdom; 376

And giving so much happiness, deserves
A little in return. I would not have her

Break her heart for a man who has none
to break;

Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightin-

gale, 381

According to the Orient tale. She is—
Ulr. The daughter of dead Stralen-

heim, your foe:

I'll wed her, nevertheless; though, to say
truth,

Just now I am not violently transported
In favour of such unions.

Sieg. But she loves you. 386

Ulr. And I love her, and therefore
would think twice.

Sieg. Alas! Love never did so.

Ulr. Then 'tis time

He should begin, and take the bandage
from

His eyes, and look before he leaps; till
now 390

He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

Sieg. But you consent?

Ulr. I did, and do.

Sieg. Then fix the day.

Ulr. 'Tis usual,

And certes courteous, to leave that to the
lady.

Sieg. I will engage for her.

Ulr. So will not I

For any woman: and as what I fix, 395

I fain would see unshaken, when she gives

Her answer, I'll give mine.

Sieg. But 'tis your office

To woo.

Ulr. Count, 'tis a marriage of your

making,

So be it of your wooing; but to please you,

I will now pay my duty to my mother,

With whom, you know, the lady Ida is.—

What would you have? You have forbid
my stirring

For manly sports beyond the castle walls,

And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,

To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-
needles, 405

And list to songs and tunes, and watch for
smiles,

And smile at pretty prattle, and look into

The eyes of feminine, as though they were

The stars receding early to our wish

Upon the dawn of a world-winning
battle— 410

What can a son or man do more?

[Exit ULRIC.]

Sieg. [solus]. Too much!—

Too much of duty, and too little love!

He pays me in the coin he owes me not:

For such hath been my wayward fate, I
could not

Fulfil a parent's duties by his side 415

Till now; but love he owes me, for my
thoughts

Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd with-
out tears

To see my child again, and now I have
found him!

But how—obedient, but with coldness;
duteous

In my sight, but with carelessness; mys-
terious— 420

Abstracted—distant—much given to long
absence,

And where—none know—in league with
the most riotous

Of our young nobles; though, to do him
justice,

He never stoops down to their vulgar
pleasures;

Yet there's some tie between them which
I cannot 425

Unravel. They look up to him—consult
him—

Throng round him as a leader: but with
me

He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
After—what! doth my father's curse

descend

Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian
near 430

To shed more blood? or—Oh! if it should
be!

Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk
 these walls
 To wither him and his—who, though they
 slew not,
 Unlatch'd the door of death for thee?
 'Twas not
 Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our
 foe, 435
 And yet I spared thee when my own
 destruction
 Slept with thee, to awake with thine
 awakening!
 And only took—Accursed gold! thou liest
 Like poison in my hands; I dare not use
 thee,
 Nor part from thee; thou camest in such
 a guise, 440
 Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all
 hands
 Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for
 thee,
 Thou villainous gold! and thy dead
 master's doom,
 Though he died not by me or mine, as
 much 444
 As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
 His orphan Ida—cherish'd her as one
 Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. The abbot, if it please
 Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
 Upon you. [*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and
 all
 Within them!
Sieg. Welcome, welcome, holy
 father! 450
 And may thy prayer be heard!—all men
 have need
 Of such, and I—
Prior. Have the first claim to all
 The prayers of our community. Our
 convent,
 Erected by your ancestors, is still
 Protected by their children.
Sieg. Yes, good father; 455
 Continue daily orisons for us
 In these dim days of heresies and blood,
 Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus,
 is
 Gone home.
Prior. To the endless home of un-
 believers,
 Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
 Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and
 fire 461
 Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!
Sieg. True, father: and to avert those
 pangs from one,
 Who, though of our most faultless holy
 church,

Yet died without its last and dearest
 offices, 465
 Which smooth the soul through purga-
 torial pains,
 I have to offer humbly this donation
 In masses for his spirit.
 [*SIEGENDORF offers the gold which he
 had taken from STRALENHEIM.*]
Prior. Count, if I
 Receive it, 'tis because I know too well
 Refusal would offend you. Be assured
 The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
 And every mass no less sung for the dead.
 Our house needs no donations, thanks to
 yours,
 Which has of old endow'd it; but from you
 And yours in all meet things 'tis fit we
 obey. 475
 For whom shall mass be said?
Sieg. [*faltering.*] For—for—the dead.
Prior. His name?
Sieg. 'Tis from a soul, and not a
 name,
 I would avert perdition.
Prior. I meant not
 To pry into your secret. We will pray
 For one unknown, the same as for the
 proudest. 480
Sieg. Secret! I have none: but, father,
 he who's gone
 Might have one; or, in short, he did
 bequeath—
 No, not bequeath—but I bestow this sum
 For pious purposes.
Prior. A proper deed
 In the behalf of our departed friends.
Sieg. But he who's gone was not my
 friend, but foe, 486
 The deadliest and the staunchest.
Prior. Better still!
 To employ our means to obtain heaven
 for the souls
 Of our dead enemies is worthy those
 Who can forgive them living.
Sieg. But I did not 490
 Forgive this man. I loathed him to the
 last,
 As he did me. I do not love him now,
 But—
Prior. Best of all! for this is pure
 religion!
 You fain would rescue him you hate from
 hell—
 An evangelical compassion—with 495
 Your own gold too!
Sieg. Father, 'tis not my gold.
Prior. Whose then? You said it was
 no legacy.
Sieg. No matter whose—of this be
 sure, that he
 Who own'd it never more will need it, save
 In that which it may purchase from your
 altars: 500
 'Tis yours, or theirs.

Prior. Is there no blood upon it? *Always the attribute of innocence.*
Sieg. No; but there's worse than *I feel it is not.*
 blood—eternal shame!
Prior. Did he who own'd it die in his *Prior.* But it will be so,
 bed? *When the mind gathers up its truth within*
Sieg. Alas! *it.*
 He did. *Remember the great festival to-morrow,*
Prior. Son! you relapse into revenge, *In which you rank amidst our chiefest*
 If you regret your enemy's bloodless *nobles,* 540
 death. *As well as your brave son; and smooth*
Sieg. His death was fathomlessly *your aspect,*
 deep in blood. *Nor in the general orison of thanks*
Prior. You said he died in his bed, not *For bloodshed stopt, let blood you shed*
 battle. *not rise,*
Sieg. He *A cloud, upon your thoughts. This were*
 Died, I scarce know—but—he was *to be*
 stabb'd i' the dark, *Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget*
 And now you have it—perish'd on his *Such things, and leave remorse unto the*
 pillow *guilty.* [Exeunt.]
 By a cut-throat!—Ay!—you may look
 upon me! 510
I am not the man. I'll meet your eye on
that point,
As I can one day God's.
Prior. Nor did he die
 By means, or men, or instrument of yours?
Sieg. No! by the God who sees and
 strikes!
Prior. Nor know you
 Who slew him?
Sieg. I could only guess at one, 515
 And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
 As unemploy'd. Except by one day's
 knowledge,
 I never saw the man who was suspected.
Prior. Then you are free from guilt.
Sieg. [eagerly]. Oh! am I?—say!
Prior. You have said so, and know
 best.
Sieg. Father! I have spoken 520
 The truth, and nought but truth, if not the
 whole;
 Yet say I am not guilty! for the blood.
 Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
 Though, by the Power who abhorreth
 human blood,
 I did not!—nay, once spared it, when I
 might 525
 And could—ay, perhaps, should (if our
 self-safety
 Be e'er excusable in such defences
 Against the attacks of over-potent foes):
 But pray for him, for me, and all my
 house; 529
 For, as I said, though I be innocent,
 I know not why, a like remorse is on me,
 As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for
 me,
 Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.
Prior. I will.
 Be comforted! You are innocent, and
 should
 Be calm as innocence.
Sieg. But calmness is not 535

ACT V

SCENE I.—*A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that family.*

Enter ARNHEIM and MEISTER, Attendants of COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Arn. Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies Already are at the portal. Have you sent The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague, As far as the man's dress and figure could By your description track him. The devil take 6
 These revels and processions! All the pleasure (If such there be) must fall to the specta-
 tors.

I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arn. Go to! my lady countess comes. *Meis.* I'd rather 10

Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade, Than follow in the train of a great man, In these dull pageantries.

Arn. Begone! and raih [Exeunt.]
 Within.

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF and IDA STRALENHEIM.

Jos. Well, Heaven be praised! the show is over.

Ida. How can you say so? Never have I dreamt 15

Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs, The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,

The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,

The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stain'd windows,
even the tombs, 20
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial
hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from
heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting
organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious
thunder;
The white robes and the lifted eyes; the
world 25
At peace! and all at peace with one
another!
Oh, my sweet mother!

[*Embracing JOSEPHINE.*
Jos. My beloved child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida. Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!
Jos. It does, my love; and never may
it throb 30
With aught more bitter.

Ida. Never shall it do so!
How should it? What should make us
grieve? I hate
To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The count, and Ulric, and your daughter
Ida. 35

Jos. Poor child!
Ida. Do you pity me?
Jos. No: I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's
sense

Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

Ida. I'll not hear
A word against a world which still
contains 40

You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he tower'd
amongst them all!
How all eyes follow'd him! The flowers
fell faster—

Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, me-
thought,

Than before all the rest; and where he
trod 45

I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor
e'er
Will wither.

Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

Ida. But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him—I fear
him.

Jos. Why so? he loves you well.

Ida. But I can never 50
Shape my thoughts of him into words to
him:

Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

Jos. How so?

Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes
suddenly,

Yet he says nothing.

Jos. It is nothing: all men, 54
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

Ida. But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's,
for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce
once withdrew

His eyes from yours to-day.

Ida. I did not see him 60
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet me-
thought,
Through my fast tears, though they were
thick and warm,

I saw him smiling on me.

Jos. I could not
See aught save heaven, to which my eyes
were rais'd, 65

Together with the people's.

Ida. I thought too
Of heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.

Jos. Come,
Let us retire! they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging
trains. 70

Ida. And, above all, these stiff and
heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as
both throb

Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and
zone.

Dear mother, I am with you.

*Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, in full dress,
from the solemnity, and LUDWIG.*

Sieg. Is he not found?

Lud. Strict search is making every-
where; and if 75

The man be in Prague, be sure he will be
found.

Sieg. Where's Ulric?

Lud. He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them
soon;

And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his excellency, with his train, 80
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, splendidly dressed.

Sieg. [to LUDWIG]. See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described.

[*Exit LUDWIG.*
Oh, Ulric!

How have I long'd for thee!

Ulr. Your wish is granted—

Behold me!

Sieg. I have seen the murderer.

Ulr. Whom? Where?

Sieg. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim. 85

Ulr. You dream.

Sieg. I live! and as I live, I saw him—
Heard him! he dared to utter even my name.

Ulr. What name?

Sieg. Werner! 'twas mine.
Ulr. It must be so

No more: forget it.

Sieg. Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name:
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

Ulr. To the point—the Hungarian?

Sieg. Listen!—The church was
throng'd: the hymn was raised;
'*Te Deum*' peal'd from nations rather
than

From choirs, in one great cry of 'God be
praised,' 95

For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread
years,

Each bloodier than the former: I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I look'd down
Along the lines of lifted faces,—from
Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment and no more), what struck me
sightless

To all else—the Hungarian's face! I grew
Sick; and when I recover'd from the mist
Which curl'd about my senses, and again
Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanks-
giving 106

Was over, and we march'd back in pro-
cession.

Ulr. Continue.

Sieg. When we reach'd the
Muldau's bridge,

The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks mann'd with revellers in their best

... shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far artillery, which seem'd to bid
A long and loud farewell to its great
doings, 115

The standards o'er me, and the trappings
round,

The roar of rushing thousands,—all—all
could not

Chase this man from my mind, although
my senses

No longer held him palpable.

Ulr. You saw him

No more, then?

Sieg. I look'd, as a dying soldier 120
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;
But still I saw him not; but in his stead—

Ulr. What in his stead?

Sieg. My eye for ever fell

Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head,
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflow'd the glittering streets of
Prague.

Ulr. What's this to the Hungarian?

Sieg. Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son;
When just as the artillery ceased, and
paused 130

The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct and keener far upon my ear
Than the late cannon's volume, this
word—'Werner!'

Ulr. Utter'd by—

Sieg. Him! I turn'd—and saw—
and fell. 135

Ulr. And wherefore? Were you seen?

Sieg. The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the
spot,

Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause:
You, too, were too remote in the pro-
cession

(The old nobles being divided from their
children) 140

To aid me.

Ulr. But I'll aid you now.

Sieg. In what?

Ulr. In searching for this man, or—

When he's found,
What shall we do with him?

Sieg. I know not that.

Ulr. Then wherefore seek?

Sieg. Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralen-
heim's, 145

And ours, seem intertwined! nor can be
Unravell'd, till—

Enter an ATTENDANT

Atten. A stranger to wait on
Your excellency.

Sieg. Who?

Atten. He gave no name.

Sieg. Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[The ATTENDANT introduces GABOR,
and afterwards exit.

Ah!

Gab. 'Tis then Werner!

Sieg. [haughtily]. The same you knew,
sir, by that name; and you! 150

Gab. [looking round]. I recognise you
both: father and son,

It seems. Count, I have heard that you,
or yours,

Have lately been in search of me: I am
here.

Sieg. I have sought you, and have
found you: you are charged

(Your own heart may inform you why)
with such 155

A crime as— [He pauses.

Gab. Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

Sieg. You shall do so—
Unless—

Gab. First, who accuses me?
Sieg. All things,

If not all men: the universal rumour—
My own presence on the spot—the place—
the time— 160

And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

Gab. And on me only?
Pause ere you answer: is no other name
Save mine, stain'd in this business?

Sieg. Trifling villain!
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all
That best dost know the innocence of him
'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy
bloody slander. 165

But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

Gab. 'Tis false! 170
Sieg. Who says so?

Gab. I
Sieg. And how disprove it?
Gab. By

The presence of the murderer.
Sieg. Name him.

Gab. He
May have more names than one. Your
lordship had so

Once on a time.
Sieg. If you mean me, I dare

Your utmost.
Gab. You may do so, and in safety;
I know the assassin.

Sieg. Where is he?
Gab. [pointing to ULRIC]. Beside you!

[ULRIC rushes forward to attack
GABOR; SIEGENDORF interposes.]

Sieg. Liar and fiend! but you shall
not be slain;

These walls are mine, and you are safe
within them. [He turns to ULRIC.]

Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so mon-
strous, 180

I could not deem it earth-born: but be
calm;

It will refute itself. But touch him not.
[ULRIC endeavours to compose himself.]

Gab. Look at him, count, and then
hear me.

Sieg. [first to GABOR, and then looking at
ULRIC]. I hear thee.

My God! you look—
Ulric. How?

Sieg. As on that dread night,
When we met in the garden.

Ulric. [composes himself]. It is nothing.
Gab. Count, you are bound to hear
me. I came hither 186

Not seeking you, but sought. When I
knelt down

Amidst the people in the church, I dream'd
not

To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of senators and princes; but you have
call'd me, 190

And we have met.
Sieg. Go on, sir.

Gab. Ere I do so,
Allow me to inquire, who profited

By Stralenheim's death? Was't I—as poor
as ever;

And poorer by suspicion on my name!
The baron lost in that last outrage neither

Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought,—
A life which stood between the claims of
others

To honours and estates scarce less than
princely.

Sieg. These hints, as vague as vain,
attach no less

To me than to my son.
Gab. I can't help that. 200

But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one among us.

I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.

But ere I can proceed—dare you protect
me? 205

Dare you command me?
[SIEGENDORF first looks at the Hungarian,

and then at ULRIC, who has unbuckled
his sabre, and is drawing lines with it

on the floor—still in its sheath.]

Ulric. [looks at his father, and says,] Let
the man go on!

Gab. I am unarm'd, count—bid your
son lay down

His sabre.
Ulric. [offers it to him contemptuously].

Take it.
Gab. No, sir, 'tis enough

That we are both unarm'd—I would not
choose

To wear a steel which may be stain'd with
more 210

Blood than came there in battle.
Ulric. [casts the sabre from him in con-

tempt]. It—or some
Such other weapon, in my hand—spared
yours

Once, when disarm'd and at my mercy.
Gab. True—

I have not forgotten it: you spared me for
Your own especial purpose—to sustain

An ignominy not my own.
Ulric. Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further?

[To SIEGENDORF.]
Sieg. [takes his son by the hand]. My

son, I know my own innocence, and
doubt not

Of yours—but I have promised this man
patience; 220

Let him continue.

Gab. I will not detain you,
By speaking of myself much: I began
Life early—and am what the world has
made me.

At Frankfort on the Oder, where I pass'd
A winter in obscurity, it was 225
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes, but not
often)

To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong re-
sistance, 230

Secured a band of desperate men, sup-
posed

Marauders from the hostile camp.—They
proved,

However, not to be so—but banditti
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt—the
forests 235

Which skirt Bohemia—even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank—and martial law slept for a
time.

At last they were escorted o'er the
frontiers,

And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their*
fate 241

I know no more.

Sieg. And what is this to Ulrich?

Gab. Amongst them there was said to
be one man

Of wonderful endowments:—birth and
fortune,

Youth, strength, and beauty, almost
superhuman, 245

And courage as unrivall'd, were pro-
claim'd

His by the public rumour; and his sway,
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft,

Such was his influence: I have no great
faith 250

In any magic save that of the mine—
I therefore deem'd him wealthy.—But my
soul

Was roused with various feelings to seek
out

This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Sieg. And did you so?

Gab. You'll hear. Chance favour'd
me: 255

A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together—it was one of
those

Occasions where men's souls look out of
them,

And show them as they are—even in their
faces:

The moment my eye met his, I exclaim'd,
'This is the man!' though he was then, as
since, 261

With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and
nearly;

I noted down his form—his gesture—
features,

Stature, and bearing—and amidst them
all, 265

'Midst every natural and acquired distinc-
tion,

I could discern, methought, the assassin's
eye

And gladiator's heart.

Ulr. [smiling]. The tale sounds well.

Gab. And may sound better.—He ap-
pear'd to me

One of those beings to whom Fortune
bends, 270

As she doth to the daring—and on whom
The fates of others oft depend; besides,

An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my point of fortune

Was to be fix'd by him.—There I was
wrong. 275

Sieg. And may not be right now.

Gab. I follow'd him,
Solicited his notice—and obtain'd it—
Though not his friendship:—it was his in-
tention

To leave the city privately—we left it
Together—and together we arrived 280

In the poor town where Werner was con-
ceal'd,

And Stralenheim was succour'd—Now
we are on

The verge—*dare* you hear further?
Sieg. I must do so—

Or I have heard too much.

Gab. I saw in you
A man above his station—and if not 285

So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions, 'twas that I had rarely seen

Men such as you appear'd in height of
mind,

In the most high of worldly rank; you
were

Poor, even to all save rags: I would have
shared 290

My purse, though slender, with you—you
refused it.

Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to
you,

That thus you urge it?

Gab. Still you owe me something,
Though not for that; and I owed you my
safety, 294

At least my seeming safety, when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds

That I had robb'd him.

Sieg. I conceal'd you—I,

Whom and whose house you arraign, re-
viving viper!

Gab. I accuse no man—save in my defence.
 You, count, have made yourself accuser—
Judge: 300
 Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
 Be just, and I'll be merciful!
Sieg. You merciful?—
 You! Base calumniator!
Gab. I. 'Twill rest
 With me at last to be so. You conceal'd me—
 In secret passages known to yourself, 305
 You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
 Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
 Of tracing back my way, I saw a glimmer,
 Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light:
 I follow'd it, and reach'd a door—a secret
 Portal—which open'd to the chamber, where, 311
 With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
 As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
 I look'd through and beheld a purple bed,
 And on it Stralenheim!—
Sieg. Asleep! And yet
 You slew him!—Wretch!
Gab. He was already slain, 316
 And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own Blood became ice.
Sieg. But he was all alone!
 You saw none else? You did not see the—
 [He pauses from agitation.
Gab. No,
 He, whom you dare not name, nor even I
 Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in
 The chamber.
Sieg. [to ULRIC]. Then, my boy! thou
 art guiltless still— 322
 Thou bad'st me say I was so once—Oh!
 now
 Do thou as much!
Gab. Be patient! I can not
 Recede now, though it shake the very walls
 Which frown above us. You remember,—
 or 326
 If not, your son does,—that the locks were changed
 Beneath his chief inspection on the morn
 Which led to this same night: how he had
 enter'd
 He best knows—but within an antechamber, 330
 The door of which was half ajar, I saw
 A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft
 With stern and anxious glance gazed back
 upon
 The bleeding body—but it moved no more.
Sieg. Oh! God of fathers!
Gab. I beheld his features

As I see yours—but yours they were not,
 though 336
 Resembling them—behold them in Count
 ULRIC's!
 Distinct as I beheld them, though the expression
 Is not now what it then was!—but it was so
 When I first charged him with the crime—
 so lately. 340
Sieg. This is so—
Gab. [interrupting him]. Nay—but hear
 me to the end!
 Now you must do so.—I conceived myself
 Betray'd by you and him (for now I saw
 There was some tie between you) into this
 Pretended den of refuge, to become 345
 The victim of your guilt; and my first
 thought
 Was vengeance: but, though arm'd with a
 short poniard
 (Having left my sword without), I was no
 match
 For him at any time, as had been proved
 That morning—either in address or force.
 I turn'd and fled—i' the dark: chance rather
 than 351
 Skill made me gain the secret door of the
 hall,
 And thence the chamber where you slept:
 if I
 Had found you waking, Heaven alone can
 tell
 What vengeance and suspicion might have
 prompted; 355
 But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that
 night.
Sieg. And yet I had horrid dreams! and
 such brief sleep,
 The stars had not gone down when I awoke.
 Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my
 father—
 And now my dream is out!
Gab. 'Tis not my fault,
 If I have read it.—Well! I fled and hid
 me— 361
 Chance led me here after so many moons—
 And show'd me Werner in Count Siegen-
 dorf!
 Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
 Inhabited the palace of a sovereign! 365
 You sought me and have found me—now
 you know
 My secret, and may weigh its worth.
Sieg. [after a pause]. Indeed!
Gab. Is it revenge or justice which in-
 spires
 Your meditation?
Sieg. Neither—I was weighing
 The value of your secret.
Gab. You shall know it
 At once:—When you were poor, and I,
 though poor, 371
 Rich enough to relieve such poverty
 As might have envied mine, I offer'd you

My purse—you would not share it:—I'll
be franker

With you: you are wealthy, noble, trusted
by 375

The imperial powers—you understand me?
Sieg. Yes.

Gab. Not quite. You think me venal,
and scarce true:

'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present. You shall
aid me:

I would have aided you—and also have
Been somewhat damaged in my name to
save 381

Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I
have said.

Sieg. Dare you await the event of a few
minutes?

Deliberation?
Gab. [*casts his eyes on ULRIC, who is leaning
against a pillar*]. If I should do so?

Sieg. I pledge my life for yours. With-
draw into 385

This tower. [*Opens a turret door*.
Gab. [*hesitatingly*]. This is the second
safe asylum

You have offer'd me.
Sieg. And was not the first so?

Gab. I know not that even now—but
will approve

The second. I have still a further shield.—
I did not enter Prague alone; and should I
Be put to rest with Stralenheim, there are
Some tongues without will wag in my be-
half.

Be brief in your decision!
Sieg. I will be so.—

My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within these walls, but it extends no fur-
ther. 395

Gab. I'll take it for so much.
Sieg. [*points to ULRIC's sabre, still upon
the ground*]. Take also that—

I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.

Gab. [*takes up the sabre*]. I will; and so
provide

To sell my life—not cheaply.
[GABOR goes into the turret, which
SIEGENDORF closes.

Sieg. [*advances to ULRIC*]. Now, Count
Ulric!

For son I dare not call thee—What say'st
thou? 400

Ulric. His tale is true.
Sieg. True, monster!

Ulric. Most true, father!

And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He
must

Be silenced.
Sieg. Ay, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

Ulric. It is no time 406
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story's true; and he too must be
silenced.

Sieg. How so?
Ulric. As Stralenheim is. Are you
so dull

As never to have hit on this before? 410
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the prince's household
been

Then summon'd, would the cry for the
police 414

Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loiter'd on the way? Or could you,
Werner,

The object of the baron's hate and fears,
Have fled, unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathom'd
you,

Doubting if you were false or feeble: I 420
Perceived you were the latter: and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.

Sieg. Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my
life,

Or thought of mine, could make you deem
me fit 425

For your accomplice?
Ulric. Father, do not raise

The devil you cannot lay between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While you were tor-
tured,

Could I be calm? Think you that I have
heard 430

This fellow's tale without some feeling?—
You

Have taught me feeling for you and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach
it?

Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 'tis
working now.

Ulric. Let it work on! the grave will keep
it down! 435

Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path
beneath you.

Yet hear me still!—If you condemn me, yet
Remember who hath taught me once too
often 440

To listen to him! Who proclaim'd to me
That there were crimes made venial by the
occasion?

That passion was our nature? that the
goods 443

Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his nerves only? Who deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamp'd

(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself—a felon's brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak invites to
deeds

He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*?

We have done
With right and wrong: and now must only
ponder

Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *un-*
known,

I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's,
I slew

Known as our foe—but not from venge-
ance. He

Was a rock in our way which I cut through
As doth the bolt, because it stood between
us

And our true destination—but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His life: when due, I but resumed the debt.

He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy. You kindled
first

The torch—you show'd the path: now
trace me that

Of safety—or let me!
Sieg. I have done with life!

Ulr. Let us have done with that which
cankers life—

Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We
have

No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men who
(Although you know them not) dare ven-
ture all things.

You stand high with the state; what passes
here

Will not excite her too great curiosity: 475
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not;—leave the rest to
me:

We must have no *third* babblers thrust be-
tween us. [Exit ULRIC.

Sieg. [solus]. Am I awake? are these my
fathers' halls?

And *yon*—my son? My son! *mine!* who
have ever

Abhor'd both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed—
The Hungarian's!—Ulr!—he hath parti-

It seems: I might have guess'd as much.
Oh fool!

Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!

[Exit into the turret, closing the
door after him.

SCENE II.—*The Interior of the Turret.*

GABOR and SIEGENDORF.

Gab. Who calls?

Sieg. I—Siegendorf! Take these and
fly!

Lose not a moment!

[Tears off a diamond star and other jewels,
and thrusts them into GABOR's hand.

Gab. What am I to do
With these?

Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them,
or hoard,

And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!
Gab. You pledged your honour for my
safety!

Sieg. And

Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle—of my own
Retainers—nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by—

Gab. Is it even so? 10
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, count,
You sought this fatal interview!

Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still!—Begone!

Gab. By the same path I enter'd?
Sieg. Yes; that's safe still;

But loiter not in Prague;—you do not
know 15

With whom you have to deal.

Gab. I know too well—
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!

Farewell! [Exit GABOR.
Sieg. [solus and listening]. He hath

clear'd the staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is
safe!

Safe!—Oh, my father's spirit!—I am
faint— 20

[He leans down upon a stone seat, near the
wall of the tower, in a drooping posture.

Enter ULRIC, with others armed, and with
weapons drawn.

Ulr. Despatch!—he's there!
Lud. The count, my lord!

Ulr. [recognising SIEGENDORF]. You
here, sir!

Sieg. Yes; if you want another victim,
strike!

Ulr. [seeing him stript of his jewels].
Where is the ruffian who hath plunder'd
you?

Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'Twas as I said—the wretch hath stript my
father 25

Of jewels which might form a prince's heir-
loom!

Away. I'll follow you forthwith.
[Exeunt all but SIEGENDORF and ULRIC.

What's this?
Where is the villain?

Sieg. There are *two*, sir: which
Are you in quest of?

Ulr. Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not
let him
Escape? 30

Sieg. He's gone.

Ulr. With your connivance?

Sieg. With
My fullest, freest aid.
Ulr. Then fare you well!

[*ULRIC is going.*
Sieg. Stop! I command—entreat—im-
plore! Oh, *Ulric*!

Will you then leave me?
Ulr. What! remain to be

Denounced—dragg'd, it may be, in chains;
and all 35

By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!

Sieg. I never had one; 40
And would you ne'er had borne the useless
name!

Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

Ulr. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains; a thousand, ay, ten
thousand 45

Sieg. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first
at Frankfort!

Ulr. Yes—men—who are worthy of the
name! Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;

Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have
been laid 51
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE and IDA.

Jos. What is't we hear? My
Siegendorf!

Thank Heaven. I see you safe!

Sieg. Safe!

Ida. Yes, dear father!

Sieg. No, no; I have no children: never
more 54
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good lord?

Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon!

Ida [*taking ULRIC's hand*]. Who shall
dare say this of *Ulric*?

Sieg. *Ida*, beware! there's blood upon
that hand.

Ida [*stooping to kiss it*]. I'd kiss it off,
though it were mine.

Sieg. It is so! 59

Ulr. Away! it is your father's!

[*Exit ULRIC.*
Ida. Oh, great God!

And I have loved this man!
[*IDA falls senseless—JOSEPHINE stands*

speechless with horror.
Sieg. The wretch hath slain

Them both!—My Josephine! we are now
alone!

Would we had ever been so!—All is over
For me!—Now open wide, my sire, thy
grave; 64

Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine!—The race of Siegendorf is past!

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

A DRAMA

ADVERTISEMENT

THIS production is founded partly on the story of a novel called 'The Three Brothers', published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's 'Wood Demon' was also taken; and partly on the 'Faust' of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

STRANGER, afterwards CESAR.
ARNOLD.
BOURBON.
PHILBERT.
CELLINI.

BERTHA.
OLIMPIA.

*Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome,
Priests, Peasants, &c.*

PART I

SCENE I.—A Forest.

Enter ARNOLD and his mother BERTHA.

Bert. Out, hunchback!

Arn. I was born so, mother!

Bert. Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven
sons,

The sole abortion!

Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Bert. I would so, too!

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART I

But as thou hast—hence, hence—and do
thy best!

That back of thine may bear its burthen;
'tis

More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn. It bears its burthen;—but, my
heart! Will it

Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me—do not kill me!

Bert. Yes—I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I
knew not

If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get
hence,

And gather wood!

Arn. I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers
are

So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn
me;

Our milk has been the same.

Bert. As is the hedgehog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the whole-
some dam

Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin,
out!

[Exit BERTHA.
Arn. *[solus]*. Oh, mother!—She is
gone, and I must do

Her bidding;—wearily but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[ARNOLD begins to cut wood: in doing
this he wounds one of his hands.

My labour for the day is over now.

Accused be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home—What home? I have no home,
no kin,

No kind—not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I
bleed, too,

Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls
to earth

Would rise a snake to sting them, as they
have stung me!

Or that the devil, to whom they liken me,
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still recon-
cile me

Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

[ARNOLD goes to a spring, and stoops to
wash his hand: he starts back.

They are right; and Nature's mirror
shows me

What she hath made me. I will not look on
it

Again, and scarce dare think on 't. Hideous
wretch

That I am! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow—like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein.

[He pauses.
And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life! Thou
blood,

Which flow'st so freely from a scratch, let
me

Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore at once
This hateful compound of her atoms, and
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new
worms!

This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
This wither'd slip of nature's nightshade—
my

Vile form—from the creation, as it hath
The green bough from the forest.

[ARNOLD places the knife in the ground,
with the point upwards.

Now 'tis set,
And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing
like

Myself, and the sweet sun which warm'd
me, but

In vain. The birds—how joyously they sing!
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's
knell;

The fallen leaves my monument; the mur-
mur

Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would
fall!

[As he rushes to throw himself upon the
knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the
fountain, which seems in motion.

The fountain moves without a wind: but
shall

The ripple of a spring change my resolve?
No. Yet it moves again! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterranean
And rocking power of the internal world.
What's here? A mist! No more?—

[A cloud comes from the fountain. He
stands gazing upon it: it is dispelled,
and a tall black man comes towards
him.

Arn. What would you? Speak! 81
Spirit or man?

Stran. As man is both, why not
Say both in one?

Arn. Your form is man's, and yet
You may be devil.

Stran. So many men are that
Which is so call'd or thought, that you may
add me ⁸⁵

To which you please, without much wrong
to either.

But come: you wish to kill yourself;—
pursue

Your purpose.

Arn. You have interrupted me.

Stran. What is that resolution which
can e'er

Be interrupted? If I be the devil ⁹⁰

You deem, a single moment would have
made you

Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;

And yet my coming saves you.

Arn. I said not

You were the demon, but that your ap-
proach

Was like one. ⁹⁵

Stran. Unless you keep company
With him (and you seem scarce used to
such high

Society), you can't tell how he approaches;
And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,

And then on me, and judge which of us
twain ⁹⁹

Looks likeliest what the boors believe to be
Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn. Do you—dare you

To taunt me with my born deformity?

Stran. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift drome-
dary ¹⁰⁴

With thy sublime of humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet

Both beings are more swift, more strong,
more mighty

In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind

With thee. Thy form is natural: 'twas only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow

The gifts which are of others upon man.

Arn. Give me the strength then of the
buffalo's foot, ¹¹³

When he spurs high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long

And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
The helmless dromedary!—and I'll bear

Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly pa-
tience. ¹¹⁸

Stran. I will.

Arn. [with surprise]. Thou canst?

Stran. Perhaps. Would you aught else?

Arn. Thou mockest me.

Stran. Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That's poor sport,
methinks. ¹²¹

To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester

Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game ¹²⁵

To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household caldrons

with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at
thee,— ¹²⁸

Now I can mock the mightiest.

Arn. Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.

Stran. Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I'm not so easily recall'd to do

Good service.

Arn. What wilt thou do for me?

Stran. Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so
irks you; ¹³⁴

Or form you to your wish in any shape.

Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the demon,
for

Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

Stran. I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore,
and give thee ¹³⁸

Thy choice.

Arn. On what condition?

Stran. There's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.

Stran. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a
carcass?

Arn. 'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the
tenement ¹⁴⁵

In which it is mislodged. But name your
compact:

Must it be sign'd in blood?

Stran. Not in your own.

Arn. Whose blood then?

Stran. We will talk of that hereafter.
But I'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have
no bond ¹⁵⁰

But your own will, no contract save your
deeds.

Are you content?

Arn. I take thee at thy word.

Stran. Now then!

[The Stranger approaches the fountain,
and turns to ARNOLD.

A little of your blood.

Arn. For what?

Stran. To mingle with the magic of the
waters,

And make the charm effective.

Arn. [holding out his wounded arm]. Take
it all. ¹⁵⁵

Stran. Not now. A few drops will suf-
fice for this.

[The Stranger takes some of ARNOLD's
blood in his hand, and casts it into the
fountain.]

- Shadows of beauty!
 Shadows of power!
 Rise to your duty—
 This is the hour! 160
 Walk lovely and pliant
 From the depth of this fountain,
 As the cloud-shapen giant
 Bstrides the Hartz Mountain.
 Come as ye were, 165
 That our eyes may behold
 The model in air
 Of the form I will mould,
 Bright as the Iris
 When ether is spann'd;— 170
 Such *his* desire is, [*Pointing to ARNOLD.*]
 Such my command!
 Demons heroic—
 Demons who wore
 The form of the stoic 175
 Or sophist of yore—
 Or the shape of each victor,
 From Macedon's boy,
 To each high Roman's picture,
 Who breathed to destroy— 180
 Shadows of beauty!
 Shadows of power!
 Up to your duty—
 This is the hour! 184
 [*Various phantoms arise from the waters,*
and pass in succession before the Stran-
ger and ARNOLD.
Arn. What do I see?
Stran. The black-eyed Roman, with
 The eagle's beak between those eyes which
 ne'er
 Beheld a conqueror, or look'd along
 The land he made not Rome's, while Rome
 became
 His, and all theirs who heir'd his very name.
Arn. The phantom's bald; my quest is
 beauty. Could I 190
 Inherit but his fame with his defects!
Stran. His brow was girt with laurels
 more than hairs.
 You see his aspect—choose it, or reject.
 I can but promise you his form; his fame
 Must be long sought and fought for.
Arn. I will fight, too. 195
 But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass;
 His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.
Stran. Then you are far more difficult
 to please
 Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus's mother,
 Or Cleopatra at sixteen—an age 200
 When love is not less in the eye than heart.
 But be it so! Shadow, pass on!
 [*The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.*
Arn. And can it
 Be, that the man who shook the earth is
 And left no footstep?
Stran. There you err. His substance
 Left graves enough, and woes enough, and
 fame 205
 More than enough to track his memory;
 But for his shadow, 'tis no more than yours,
 Except a little longer and less crooked
 I' the sun. Behold another!
 [*A second phantom passes.*
Arn. Who is he?
Stran. He was the fairest and the bravest
 of 210
 Athenians. Look upon him well.
Arn. He is
 More lovely than the last. How beautiful!
Stran. Such was the curled son of Clini-
 as;—Wouldst thou
 Invest thee with his form?
Arn. Would that I had
 Been born with it! But since I may choose
 further, 215
 I will look further.
 [*The shade of Alcibiades disappears.*
Stran. Lo! behold again!
Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-
 nosed, round-eyed satyr,
 With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
 The splay feet and low stature! I had better
 Remain that which I am.
Stran. And yet he was
 The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
 And personification of all virtue. 222
 But you reject him?
Arn. If his form could bring me
 That which redeem'd it—no.
Stran. I have no power
 To promise that; but you may try, and find it
 Easier in such a form, or in your own.
Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
 Though I have that about me which has
 need on't. 228
 Let him fleet on.
Stran. Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!
 [*The shadow of Socrates disappears: an-*
other rises.
Arn. What's here? whose broad brow
 and whose curly beard
 And manly aspect look like Hercules,
 Save that his jocund eye hath more of
 Bacchus 232
 Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
 Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
 As if he knew the worthlessness of those
 For whom he had fought.
Stran. It was the man who lost
 The ancient world for love.
Arn. I cannot blame him,
 Since I have risk'd my soul because I find
 not 238
 That which he exchanged the earth for.
Stran. Since so far
 You seem congenial, will you wear his
 features?
Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am
 difficult,
 If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
 Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
 Whence they float back before us.

SCENE I]

Stran. Hence, triumvir,
Thy Cleopatra's waiting.

[*The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.*

Arn. Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and
stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays—a some-
thing
Which shines from him, and yet is but the
flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was he e'er human only?

Stran. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that form'd his urn.

Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?

Stran. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in
war—

Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

Arn. Yet one shadow more.
Stran. [*addressing the shadow*]. Get thee
to Lamia's lap!

[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes
vanishes: another rises.*

I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new gar-
ment.

Arn. Content! I will fix here.

Stran. I must commend
Your choice. The god-like son of the sea-
goddess,

The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, roll'd o'er sands of gold,
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vow'd to Sperchius as they were—be-
hold them!

And him—as he stood by Polixena,
With sanction'd and with soften'd love, be-
fore

The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep
passion

For the sweet downcast virgin, whose
young hand

Trembled in his who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece look'd her last upon her best, the
instant

Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn. I gaze upon him

As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

Stran. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.

Arn. Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.

Stran. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

Arn. Must I wait?

Stran. No; that were a pity. But a word
or two:

His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

Arn. Why not?

Stran. Glorious ambition!

I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth: and their cursed
engines,

Their culverins, and so forth, would find
way

Through our friend's armour there, with
greater ease

Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel,
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Stran. Thou shalt be beauteous as the
thing thou seest,

And strong as what it was, and—

Arn. I ask not

For valour, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind

By heart and soul, and make itself the
equal—

Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.

They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of
fortune,

And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win
them.

Stran. Well spoken! and thou doubtless
wilt remain

Form'd as thou art. I may dismiss the
mould

Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to
incase

This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

Arn. Had no power presented me

The possibility of change, I would

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART I

Have done the best which spirit may to
make 330

Its way with all deformity's dull, deady
Discouraging weight upon me, like a moun-
tain,

In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders—
A hateful and unsightly molehill, to
The eyes of happier men. I would have
look'd 335

On beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful
Beyond the world they brighten, with a
sigh—

Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not
love me 340

In turn, because of this vile crooked clog,
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have
borne

It all, had not my mother spurn'd me from
her.

The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape;—my dam beheld my shape was
hopeless. 345

Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley,—happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what
courage 350

And perseverance could have done, per-
chance

Had made me something—as it has made
heroes

Of the same mould as mine. You lately
saw me

Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
And he who is so is the master of 355
Whatever dreads to die.

Stran. Decide between
What you have been, or will be.

Arn. I have done so.
You have open'd brighter prospects to my
eyes,

And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be fear'd, admired, respected, loved
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be beloved. As thou showest me
A choice of forms, I take the one I view.

Haste! haste!
Stran. And what shall I wear?

Arn. Surely, he
Who can command all forms will choose
the highest, 365

Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris: or—still
higher—

The poet's god, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

Stran. Less will content me; 370
For I, too, love a change.

Arn. Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

Stran. If I chose,
I might be whiter; but I have a penchant
For black—it is so honest, and besides
Can neither blush with shame nor pale
with fear; 375

But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.

Arn. Mine!
Stran. Yes. You

Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with
Bertha,
Your mother's offspring. People have
their tastes:

You have yours—I mine.

Arn. Despatch! Despatch!
Stran. Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and
moulds it along the turf, and then
addresses the phantom of Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis's boy!

Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy:

From the red earth, like Adam, 385
Thy likeness I shape,

As the being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.

Thou clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek 390

Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!

Ye violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!

And thou, sunshiny water, 395
Of blood take the guise!

Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,

And wave o'er his brows
As thou waviest in air! 400

Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!

But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!

Let his flesh be the purest 405
Of mould, in which grew

The lily-root surest,
And drank the dew!

Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound, 410

And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!

Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirr'd,

Know me, and hear me, 415
And leap to my word!

Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!

'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation! 420

[*ARNOLD falls senseless; his soul passes
into the shape of Achilles, which rises
from the ground; while the phantom
has disappeared, part by part, as the
figure was formed from the earth.*

Arn. [in his new form]. I love, and I shall be beloved! O, life!
At last I feel thee! Glorious spirit!

Stran. Stop!
What shall become of your abandon'd garment,
Yon hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?

Arn. Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.

Stran. And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.

Arn. Let us but leave it there
No matter what becomes on 't.

Stran. That's ungracious,
If not ungrateful. Whatso'er it be,
It hath sustain'd your soul full many a day.

Arn. Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a
gem

Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

Stran. But if I give another form, it must
be

By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have
long

Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them,—though he reap the
benefit

Of the original workmanship: and there-
fore

Some one must be found to assume the
shape

You have quitted.

Arn. Who would do so?

Stran. That I know not,
And therefore I must.

Arn. You!
Stran. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of
beauty.

Arn. True. I forget all things in the new
joy

Of this immortal change.

Stran. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

Arn. I would be spared this.

Stran. But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?

Arn. Do as thou wilt.
Stran. [to the late form of ARNOLD, ex-
tended on the earth].

Clay! not dead, but soul-less!

Though no man would choose thee,
An immortal no less

Deigns not to refuse thee.

Clay thou art; and unto spirit

All clay is of equal merit.

Fire! without which nought can live;

Fire! but in which nought can live,

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot.

Fire! the only element

Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,

Save the worm which dieth not,

Can preserve a moment's form,

But must with thyself be blent:

Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:

Fire! Creation's first-born daughter,

And Destruction's threaten'd son,

When heaven with the world hath done:

Fire! assist me to renew

Life in what lies in my view

Stiff and cold!

His resurrection rests with me and you!

One little, marshy spark of flame—

And he again shall seem the same;

But I his spirit's place shall hold!

[An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood

and rests on the brow of the body. The

Stranger disappears: the body rises.

Arn. [in his new form]. Oh! horrible!

Stran. [in ARNOLD's late shape]. What!

tremblest thou?

Arn. Not so—

I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape

Thou lately worst?

Stran. To the world of shadows.

But let us thread the present. Whither wilt

thou?

Arn. Must thou be my companion?

Stran. Wherefore not?

Your betters keep worse company.

Arn. My betters!

Stran. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of

your new form:

I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's

well;

You improve apace;—two changes in an

instant,

And you are old in the world's ways already.

But bear with me: indeed you'll find me

useful

Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pro-
nounce

Where shall we now be errant?

Arn. Where the world

Is thickest, that I may behold it in

its workings.

Stran. That's to say, where there is war

And woman in activity. Let's see!

Spain—Italy—the new Atlantic world—

Afric, with all its Moors. In very truth,

There is small choice: the whole race are

just now

Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.

Stran. A goodly choice—

And scarce a better to be found on earth.

Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide

too;

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART I

For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish
action 505

Of the old Vandals, are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.

Arn. How
Shall we proceed?

Stran. Like gallants, on good couriers.
What, ho! my chargers! Never yet were
better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po. 510
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn. A noble sight!

Stran. And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!

Arn. The mighty steam, which volumes
high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very
air; 515

And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies,
wheel

Around their manes, as common insects
swarm

Round common steeds towards sunset.

Stran. Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.

Arn. And these
Our dark-eyed pages—what may be their
names? 520

Stran. You shall baptize them.

Arn. What! in holy water?

Stran. Why not? The deeper sinner,
better saint.

Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot,
sure, be demons.

Stran. True; the devil's always ugly;
and your beauty
Is never diabolical.

Arn. I'll call him 525
Who bears the golden horn, and wears
such bright

And blooming aspect, *Huon*; for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the
other

And darker, and more thoughtful, who
smiles not, 530

But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?

Stran. I have ten thousand names, and
twice

As many attributes: but as I wear 535
A human shape, will take a human name.

Arn. More human than the shape
(though it was mine once)

I trust.

Stran. Then call me *Cæsar*.

Arn. Why, that name

Belongs to empires, and has been but
borne 539

By the world's lords.

Stran. And therefore fittest for
The devil in disguise—since so you deem
me,

Unless you call me pope instead.

Arn. Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain *Arnold* still.

Cæs. We'll add a title—
'Count *Arnold*': it hath no ungracious
sound, 545

And will look well upon a billet-doux.

Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field.

Cæs. [sings]. To horse! to horse! my
coal-black steed

Paws the ground, and snuffs the air!
There's not a foal of Arab's breed 550

More knows whom he must bear;

On the hill he will not tire,

Swifter as it waxes higher;

In the marsh he will not slacken,

On the plain he will not sink, 555

In the wave he will not pant,

Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;

In the race he will not pant,

In the combat he'll not faint;

On the stones he will not stumble, 560

Time nor toil shall make him humble;

In the stall he will not stiffen,

But be winged as a griffin,

Only flying with his feet:

And will not such a voyage be sweet?

Merrily! merrily! never unsound, 566

Shall our bonny black horses skim over
the ground!

From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we,
or fly!

For we'll leave them behind in the glance
of an eye.

[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*]

SCENE II.—*A Camp before the Walls
of Rome*

ARNOLD and CÆSAR.

Cæs. You are well enter'd now.

Arn. Ay; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæs. Then wipe them, and see clearly.
Why!

Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bour-
bon, 5

Late constable of France: and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's
lord

Under its emperors, and—changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire—
Lady of the old world.

Arn. How old? What! are there
New worlds?

SCENE II]

Cæs. To you. You'll find there are such
shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one half of the world named a whole
new one,

Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn. I'll trust them. 16

Cæs. Do! they will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

Arn. Dog!

Cæs. Man!

Arn. Devil!

Cæs. Your obedient humble servant.

Arn. Say master rather. Thou hast lured
me on,

Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am
here. 20

Cæs. And where wouldst thou be?

Arn. Oh, at peace—in peace.

Cæs. And where is that which is so?
From the star

To the winding worm, all life is motion;
and

In life commotion is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm
winds its way,

Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the
subject

Of something which has made it live and
die. 30

You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fix'd necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.

Arn. And when it prospers—

Cæs. 'Tis no rebellion.

Arn. Will it prosper now?

Cæs. The Bourbon hath given orders
for the assault, 35

And by the dawn there will be work.

Arn. Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from
the cross, 40

Which his blood made a badge of glory
and

Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only
refuge).

Cæs. 'Tis there, and shall be.

Arn. What?

Cæs. The crucifix

Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls, 46
And harquebusses, and what not; besides
The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

Arn. And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall, 50

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

The theatre where emperors and their
subjects

(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze
upon

The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to
joust 55

In the arena (as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe uncon-
quer'd);

Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well 59

As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and 'Pass on
To a new gladiator!'—Must it fall?

Cæs. The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you con-
found

Both them and me.

Arn. To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

Cæs. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great
sieges;

Formen must have their prey after long toil.

Arn. The sun goes down as calmly,
and perhaps 70

More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæs. I saw him.

Arn. You!

Cæs. Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape,
And a worse name. I'm Cæsar and a
hunchback 75

Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a
baldhead,

And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.

I saw your Romulus (simple as I am) 80
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same
womb,

Because he leapt a ditch ('twas then no
wall,

Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest
cement

Was brother's blood; and if its native
blood 84

Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 'twas yellow, it will never wear

The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide

Have made their never-ceasing scene of
slaughter

For ages.

Arn. But what have these done, their
far 90

Remote descendants, who have lived in
peace,

The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART I

Cas. And what had they done, whom
the old

Romans o'erswept?—Hark!

Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve 95
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

Cas. And why should they not sing
as well as swans?

They are black ones, to be sure.

Arn. So, you are learn'd,
I see, too?

Cas. In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the for-
gotten 101

Etruscan letters, and—were I so minded—
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer
than

Your alphabet.

Arn. And wherefore do you not?

Cas. It answers better to resolve the
alphabet 105

Back into hieroglyphics. Like your states-
man,

And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have
built

More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's
dull ooze, 110

Who fail'd and fled each other. Why?
why, marry,

Because no man could understand his
neighbour.

They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brother-
hood,

Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud,
their 115

Cabala; their best brick-work, where-
withal

They build more—

Arn. [interrupting him]. Oh, thou ever-
lasting sneerer!

Be silent! How the soldier's rough strain
seems

Softened by distance to a hymn-like
cadence!

Listen!

Cas. Yes. I have heard the angels
sing. 120

Arn. And demons howl.

Cas. And man, too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;

With Bourbon, the rover, 125

They pass'd the broad Po.

We have beaten all foemen,

We have captured a king,

We have turn'd back on no men, 130

And so let us sing!

Here's the Bourbon far ever!

Though penniless all,

We'll have one more endeavour

At yonder old wall.

With the Bourbon we'll gather 135

At day-dawn before

The gates, and together

Or break or climb o'er

The wall: on the ladder

As mounts each firm foot, 140

Our shout shall grow gladder,

And death only be mute.

With the Bourbon we'll mount o'er

The walls of old Rome,

And who then shall count o'er 145

The spoils of each dome?

Up! up with the lily!

And down with the keys!

In old Rome, the seven-hilly, 150

We'll revel at ease.

Her streets shall be gory,

Her Tiber all red,

And her temples so hoary

Shall clang with our tread.

Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon! 155

The Bourbon for aye!

Of our song bear the burden!

And fire, fire away!

With Spain for the vanguard, 160

Our varied host comes;

And next to the Spaniard

Beat Germany's drums;

And Italy's lances

Are couch'd at their mother;

But our leader from France is, 165

Who warr'd with his brother.

Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!

Sans country or home,

We'll follow the Bourbon, 170

To plunder old Rome.

Cas. An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to
hear.

Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus.
But here comes

The general with his chiefs and men of
trust.

A goodly rebel!

*Enter the Constable BOURBON 'cum suis,'
&c. &c.*

Phil. How now, noble prince, 175
You are not cheerful?

Bourb. Why should I be so?

Phil. Upon the eve of conquest, such
as ours,

Most men would be so.

Bourb. If I were secure!

Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were
the walls of adamant,

They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp
artillery. 180

Bourb. That they will falter is my
least of fears.

SCENE II]

That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on—were those hoary
walls

Mountains, and those who guard them
like the gods ¹⁸⁵
Of the old fables, I would trust my
Titans;—

But now—

Phil. They are but men who war with
mortals.

Bourb. True: but those walls have
girded in great ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past
earth

And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and me-
thinks ¹⁹¹

They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy
hands,

And beckon me away!

Phil. So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of
shadows? ¹⁹⁵

Bourb. They do not menace me. I
could have faced,

Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and death-
like hands,

And with their thin aspen faces and fix'd
eyes

Fascinate mine. Look there!

Phil. I look upon ²⁰⁰
A lofty battlement.

Bourb. And there!

Phil. Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Shelter'd by the grey parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

Bourb. You are blind. ²⁰⁵

Phil. If seeing nothing more than may
be seen

Be so.

Bourb. A thousand years have mann'd
the walls

With all their heroes,—the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave, ²¹⁰
And the first Caesar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquer'd, and be
greater!

Bourb. True: so I will, or perish.

Phil. You can not.

In such an enterprise to die is rather ²¹⁵
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.

[*Count ARNOLD and CÆSAR advance.*

Cæs. And the mere men—do they too
sweat beneath

The noon of this same ever-scorching
glory?

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

Bourb.

Ah!

Welcome the bitter hunchback! and his
master,

The beauty of our host, and brave as
beauteous, ²²⁰

And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæs.

You will find,
So please your highness, no less for your-
self.

Bourb. And if I do, there will not be a
labourer

More forward, hunchback!

Cæs.

You may well say so, ²²⁵
For you have seen that back—as general,
Placed in the rear in action—but your foes
Have never seen it.

Bourb.

That's a fair retort,
For I provoked it:—but the Bourbon's
breast

Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the
devil. ²³¹

Cæs.

And if I were, I might have saved
myself

The toil of coming here.

Phil.

Why so?

Cæs.

One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold
accord ²³⁴

Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

Bourb.

Arnold, your
Slight crooked friend's as snake-like in his
words

As his deeds.

Cæs.

Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer—I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when
stung. ²⁴⁰

Bourb.

You are brave, and that's
enough for me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action—and that's
more.

I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.

Cæs.

They are but bad company, your
highness;

And worse even for their friends than foes,
as being ²⁴⁵

More permanent acquaintance.

Phil.

How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

Cæs.

You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie—it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

Bourb.

Philibert! ²⁵⁰
Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and
mountain shoulder,

In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of
licence,

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART I

And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to 256
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famish'd, sullen, grumblingslave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full
meal,

And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.

Cæs. It would be well
If the earth's princes ask'd no more.

Bourb. Be silent!

Cæs. Ay, but not idle. Work yourself
with words!

You have few to speak.

Phil. What means the audacious
prater?

Cæs. To prate, like other prophets.
Bourb. Philibert! 265

Why will you vex him? Have we not
enough

To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn. I have heard as much, my lord.

Bourb. And you will follow?

Arn. Since I must not lead.

Bourb. 'Tis necessary for the further
daring 270

Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost
ladder's

First step.

Cæs. Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.

Bourb. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-
morrow. 275

Through every change the seven-hill'd
city hath

Retain'd her sway o'er nations, and the
Cæsars

But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or
priest,

Still the world's masters! Civilized, bar-
barian, 280

Or saintly; still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an empire. Well!
'Twas *their* turn—now 'tis ours; and let
us hope

That we will fight as well, and rule much
better.

Cæs. No doubt, the camp's the school
of civic rights. 285

What would you make of Rome?

Bourb. That which it was.

Cæs. In Alaric's time?

Bourb. No, slave! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs—

Cæs. And kings!
'Tis a great name for blood-hounds.

Bourb. There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt
never 290

Be serious?

Cæs. On the eve of battle, no;—
That were not soldier-like. 'Tis for the
general

To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should
we think?

Our tutelary deity, in a leader's shape, 295
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof
from hosts!

If the knaves take to thinking, you will
have

To crack those walls alone.

Bourb. You may sneer, since
'Tis lucky for you that you fight no worse
for't.

Cæs. I thank you for the freedom; 'tis
the only 300

Pay I have taken in your highness' service.

Bourb. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall
pay yourself.

Look on those towers; they hold my
treasury;

But, Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

Arn. Prince, my service 305
Is yours, as in the field.

Bourb. In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at day-
break.

Cæs. And mine?

Bourb. To follow glory with the
Bourbon.

Good night!

Arn. [to CÆSAR]. Prepare our armour
for the assault,

And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT,*
&c.]

Cæs. [*solus*]. Within thy tent! 310
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with
my presence?

Or that this crooked coffer, which con-
tain'd

Thy principle of life, is aught to me
Except a mask? And these are men, for-
sooth!

Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's
bastards! 315

This is the consequence of giving matter
The power of thought. It is a stubborn
substance,

And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
Ever relapsing into its first elements.

Well! I must play with these poor puppets:
'tis 320

The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
When I grow weary of it, I have business

Amongst the stars, which these poor
creatures deem

Were made for them to look at. 'Twere a
jest now

To bring one down amongst them, and
set fire 325

Unto their anthill: how the pismires then

SCENE II]

Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and,
 ceasing
 From tearing down each other's nests,
 pipe forth
 One universal orison! Ha! ha!
 [Exit CÆSAR.]

PART II

SCENE I.—*Before the walls of Rome.—The
 Assault: the Army in motion, with
 ladders to scale the walls; BOURBON,
 with a white scarf over his armour, fore-
 most.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

'Tis the morn, but dim and dark.
 Whither flies the silent lark?
 Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
 Is the day indeed begun?
 Nature's eye is melancholy
 O'er the city high and holy:
 But without there is a din
 Should arouse the saints within,
 And revive the heroic ashes
 Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
 Oh, ye seven hills! awaken,
 Ere your very base be shaken!

Hearken to the steady stamp!
 Mars is in their every tramp!
 Not a step is out of tune, 15
 As the tides obey the moon!
 On they march, though to self-slaughter,
 Regular as rolling water,
 Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
 Of huge moles, but keep their order, 20
 Breaking only rank by rank.
 Hearken to the armour's clank!
 Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
 How he glares upon the barrier:
 Look on each step of each ladder, 25
 As the stripes that streak an adder.

Look upon the bristling wall,
 Mann'd without an interval!
 Round and round, and tier on tier,
 Cannon's black mouth, shining spear, 30
 Lit match, bell-mouth'd musketoon,
 Gaping to be murderous soon;
 All the warlike gear of old,
 Mix'd with what we now behold,
 In this strife 'twixt old and new, 35
 Gather like a locusts' crew.
 Shade of Remus! 'tis a time
 Awful as thy brother's crime!
 Christians war against Christ's shrine:—
 Must its lot be like to thine? 40

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

IV

Near—and near—and nearer still,
 As the earthquake saps the hill,
 First with trembling, hollow motion,
 Like a scarce awaken'd ocean, 44
 Then with stronger shock and louder,
 Till the rocks are crush'd to powder,—
 Onward sweeps the rolling host!
 Heroes of the immortal boast!
 Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
 First flowers of the bloody meadows 50
 Which encompass Rome, the mother
 Of a people without brother!
 Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
 Plough the root up of your laurels?
 Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
 Weep not—*strike!* for Rome is mourning!

Onward sweep the varied nations!
 Famine long hath dealt their rations.
 To the wall, with hate and hunger,
 Numerous as wolves, and stronger, 60
 On they sweep. Oh, glorious city!
 Must thou be a theme for pity?
 Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
 Alaric was a gentle foe-man,
 Match'd with Bourbon's black banditti!
 Rouse thee, thou eternal city; 66
 Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
 With thine own hand to thy porch,
 Than behold such hosts pollute
 Your worst dwelling with their foot. 70

VI

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
 Ilion's children find no Hector;
 Priam's offspring loved their brother;
 Rome's great sire forgot his mother, 75
 When he slew his gallant twin,
 With inexpiable sin.
 See the giant shadow stride
 O'er the ramparts high and wide!
 When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
 Its foundation mourn'd thy fall, 80
 Now, though towering like a Babel,
 Who to stop his steps are able?
 Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
 Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

Now they reach thee in their anger: 85
 Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
 Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
 Death is in thy walls and under.
 Now the meeting steel first clashes,
 Downward then the ladder crashes, 90
 With its iron load all gleaming,
 Lying at its foot blaspheming!
 Up again! for every warrior
 Slain, another climbs the barrier.
 Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches 95
 Europe's mingling gore enriches.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART II

Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!— 100
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

VIII

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quench'd hearths be Até's!
Yet again, ye shadowy heroes, 105
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother;
'Twas the Roman curb'd the Roman;—
Brennus was a baffled foeman. 110
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier founders of those altars, 115
True and Christian,—strike the assaulters!
Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even nature's self abhorrent.
Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited! 120
Rome be crush'd to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome!

BOURBON, ARNOLD, CÆSAR, and others,
arrive at the foot of the wall. ARNOLD
is about to plant his ladder.

Bourb. Hold, Arnold! I am first.

Arn. Not so, my lord.

Bourb. Hold, sir, I charge you!

Follow! I am proud

Of such a follower, but will brook no
leader. 125

[BOURBON plants his ladder, and begins
to mount.

Now, boys! On! on!

[A shot strikes him, and BOURBON falls.

Cæs. And off!

Arn. Eternal powers!

The host will be appall'd,—but vengeance!
vengeance!

Bourb. 'Tis nothing—lend me your
hand.

[BOURBON takes ARNOLD by the hand,
and rises; but as he puts his foot on
the step, falls again.

Arnold! I am sped.
Conceal my fall—all will go well—conceal
it!

Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust
anon; 130

Let not the soldiers see it.

Arn. You must be

Removed; the aid of—

Bourb. No, my gallant boy!

Death is upon me. But what is one life?
The Bourbon's spirit shall command them
still.

Keep them yet ignorant that I am but
clay, 135

Till they are conquerors—then do as you
may.

Cæs. Would not your highness choose
to kiss the cross?

We have no priest here, but the hilt of
sword

May serve instead:—it did the same for
Bayard.

Bourb. Thou bitter slave! to name
him at this time! 140

But I deserve it.

Arn. [to CÆSAR]. Villain, hold your
peace!

Cæs. What, when a Christian dies?
Shall I not offer

A Christian 'Vade in pace'?

Arn. Silence! Oh!

Those eyes are glazing which o'erlook'd
the world,

And saw no equal.

Bourb. Arnold, shouldst thou see

France—But hark! hark! the assault
grows warmer—Oh! 146

For but an hour, a minute more of life,
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold,
hence!

You lose time—they will conquer Rome
without thee.

Arn. And without thee.

Bourb. Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe
not 151

That I have ceased to breathe. Away!
and be

Victorious.

Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.

Bourb. You must—farewell—Up! up!
the world is winning.

[BOURBON dies.

Cæs. [to ARNOLD]. Come, count, to
business.

Arn. True. I'll weep hereafter. 155

[ARNOLD covers BOURBON's body with a
mantle, mounts the ladder, crying

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome
is ours!

Cæs. Good night, lord constable! thou
wert a man.

[CÆSAR follows ARNOLD; they reach
the battlement; ARNOLD and CÆSAR
are struck down.

Cæs. A precious Somerset! Is your
counthood injured?

Arn. No. [Remounts the ladder.

Cæs. A rare blood-hound, when his
own is heated!

And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes
them down! 160

His hand is on the battlement—he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and—What have we here?—a
Roman? [A man falls.

SCENE I]

The first bird of the covey! he has fallen
On the outside of the nest. Why, how
now, fellow? 165

Wounded Man. A drop of water!

Cæs. Blood's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.

Wounded Man. I have died for Rome.
[Dies.]

Cæs. And so did Bourbon, in another
sense.
Oh, these immortal men! and their great
motives! 169

But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge! charge!
[CÆSAR mounts the ladder; the scene
closes.]

SCENE II.—*The City.—Combats between
the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets.
Inhabitants flying in confusion.*

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. I cannot find my hero; he is
mix'd

With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could
they doff 6

Their hose as they have doff'd their hats,
'twould be

A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since
the mire 10

Is of the self-same purple hue.

*Enter a party fighting—ARNOLD at the
head of the Besiegers.*

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins—Gore
and Glory.

Holla! hold, count!

Arn. Away! they must not rally.

Cæs. I tell thee, be not rash; a golden
bridge

Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee 15

A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,

But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,

I dipt thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart

More than Pelides' heel; why, then, be
cautious, 22

And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were

Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.

Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions
roar? [ARNOLD rushes into the
combat.]

Cæs. A precious sample of humanity!

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Well, his blood's up; and if a little's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.

[ARNOLD engages with a Roman, who
retires towards a portico.]

Arn. Yield thee, slave!

I promise quarter.

Rom. That's soon said.

Arn. And done— 30

My word is known.

Rom. So shall be my deeds.

[They re-engage. CÆSAR comes
forward.]

Cæs. Why, Arnold! hold thine own:
thou hast in hand

A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;

Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.

Not so, my musqueteer; 'twas he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.

Arn. Ay, did he so? 36

Then he hath carved his monument.

Rom. I yet

May live to carve your better's.

Cæs. Well said, my man of marble!

Benvenuto,

Thou hast some practice in both ways;
and he 40

Who slays Cellini will have work'd as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.

[ARNOLD disarms and wounds CELLINI,
but slightly: the latter draws a pistol,
and fires; then retires, and disappears
through the portico.]

Cæs. How farest thou? Thou hast a
taste, methinks,

Of red Bellona's banquet.

Arn. [staggered]. 'Tis a scratch.

Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me
thus. 45

Cæs. Where is it?

Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword
arm—

And that's enough. I am thirsty: would I
had

A helm of water!

Cæs. That's a liquid now

In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.

Arn. And my thirst increases;—but
I'll find a way to quench it.

Cæs. Or be quench'd
Thyself.

Arn. The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in pra-
tising;

Prithee be quick. [CÆSAR binds on the
scarf.]

And what dost thou so idly?

Why dost not strike?

Cæs. Your old philosophers 55

Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a

prize

Worth wrestling for, I may be found a
Milo.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

[PART II

Arn. Ay, 'gainst an oak.

Cæs. A forest, when it suits me:
I combat with a mass, or not at all. 60
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these
labourers

Will reap my harvest gratis.

Arn. Thou art still
A fiend!

Cæs. And thou—a man.

Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.

Cæs. True—as men are. 65

Arn. And what is that?

Cæs. Thou feelest and thou see'st.

[*Exit ARNOLD, joining in the combat, which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—*St. Peter's—The Interior of the Church—The Pope at the Altar—Priests, &c., crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.*

Enter CÆSAR.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them,
comrades! seize upon those lamps!
Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the
chine!

His rosary's of gold!

Lutheran Soldier. Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance
now—

Yonder stands Anti-Christ!

Cæs. [interposing]. How now, schismatic? 5

What wouldst thou?

Luth. Sold. In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a
Christian.

Cæs. Yes, a disciple that would make
the founder

Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to
plunder. 10

Luth. Sold. I say he is the devil.

Cæs. Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognise you for his own.

Luth. Sold. Why would you save him?
I repeat he is

The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæs. And that's the reason: would you
make a quarrel 15

With your best friends? You had far best
be quiet;

His hour is not yet come.

Luth. Sold. That shall be seen!

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward: a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot of the Altar.*]

Cæs. [to the Lutheran]. I told you so.

Luth. Sold. And will you not avenge
me?

Cæs. Not I! You know that 'Vengeance
is the Lord's':

You see he loves no interlopers.

Luth. Sold. [dying]. Oh! 20

Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crown'd with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive

My feebleness of arm that reach'd him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's

No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sack-
cloth 27

And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*]

Cæs. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.

Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.*]

Cæs. Ha! right nobly battled!

Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great
professions, 30

Together by the ears and hearts! I have
not

Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the
best then;

Now they must take their turn.

Soldiers. He hath escaped!

Follow!

Another Sold. They have barr'd the
narrow passage up, 35
And it is clogg'd with dead even to the
door.

Cæs. I am glad he hath escaped: he
may thank me for't

In part. I would not have his bulls
abolish'd—

'Twere worth one half our empire: his
indulgences

Demand some in return,—no, no, he must
not 40

Fall;—and, besides, his now escape may
furnish

A future miracle, in future proof

Of his infallibility.

[*To the Spanish Soldiery.*]

Well, cut-throats!
What do you pause for? If you make not
haste, 44

There will not be a link of pious gold left.

And you, too, Catholics! Would ye return

From such a pilgrimage without a relic?

The very Lutherans have more true devo-
tion:

See how they strip the shrines!

Soldiers. By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear

The best away.

Cæs. And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion. [*The Soldiers*

disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.]

SCENE II]

Cæs. They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on
wave
Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the
ocean, 55
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So another!

*Enter OLIMPIA, flying from the pursuit—
She springs upon the Altar.*

Sold. She's mine!

Another Sold. [opposing the former].

You lie, I track'd her first: and were she
The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her.

[*They fight.*
3d Sold. [advancing towards OLIMPIA].

You may settle

Your claims; I'll make mine good.

Olimp. Infernal slave! 60
You touch me not alive.

3d Sold. Alive or dead!

Olim. [embracing a massive crucifix].
Respect your God!

3d Sold. Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.

[*As he advances, OLIMPIA, with a strong
and sudden effort, casts down the cru-
cifix; it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*

3d Sold. Oh, great God!

Olimp. Ah! now you recognise him.

3d. Sold. My brain's crush'd!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness!

[*He dies.*
Other Soldiers [coming up]. Slay her,

although she had a thousand lives:
She hath kill'd our comrade.

Olimp. Welcome such a death!
You have no life to give, which the worst
slave

Would take, Great God! through thy
redeeming Son,

And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and
him, and thee! 71

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see? Accursed jackals!
Forbear!

Cæs. [aside and laughing]. Ha! ha!
here's equity! The dogs

Have as much right as he. But to the issue!
Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our
comrade.

Arn. With what weapon? 75

Sold. The cross, beneath which he is
crush'd; behold him

Lie there, more like a worm than man; she
cast it

Upon his head.

Arn. Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye
such,

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Ye would have honour'd her. But get ye
hence, 80

And thank your meanness, other God you
have none,

For your existence. Had you touch'd a hair
Of those dishevell'd locks, I would have
thinn'd

Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves

But not even these till he permits.
A Sold. [murmuring]. The lion

Might conquer for himself then.
Arn. [cuts him down]. Mutineer!

Rebel in hell—you shall obey on earth!
[*The Soldiers assault ARNOLD.*

Arn. Come on! I'm glad on 't! I will
show you, slaves,

How you should be commanded, and who
led you 90

First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,

As you are bold within it.
[*ARNOLD mows down the foremost; the
rest throw down their arms.*

Soldiers. Mercy! mercy!
Arn. Then learn to grant it. Have I

taught you who
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers. We saw it, and we know it;
yet forgive 96

A moment's error in the heat of conquest—
The conquest which you led to.

Arn. Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them

fix'd
In the Colonna palace.

Olimp. [aside]. In my father's 100
House!

Arn. [to the Soldiers]. Leave your arms;
ye have no further need

Of such: the city's render'd. And mark
well

You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out
a stream

As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.
Soldiers [deposing their arms and depart-
ing]. We obey!

Arn. [to OLIMPIA]. Lady, you are safe.
Olimp. I should be so, 105

Had I a knife even; but it matters not—
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the

marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down

Upon destruction, shall my head be dash'd,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee,
man! 110

Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured
thee.

Olimp. No! Thou hast only sack'd my
native land,—

No injury!—and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury!—this

temple— 115

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[PART II

Slippery with Roman and with holy gore!
No injury! And now thou wouldst pre-
serve me,

To be—but that shall never be!

[She raises her eyes to heaven, folds her robe round her, and prepares to dash herself down on the side of the Altar opposite to that where ARNOLD stands.]

Arn. Hold! hold!

I swear.

Olimp. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee. 120

I know thee.

Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though—

Olimp. I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.

I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me, 125

And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me
God's,

I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeemed infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

[OLIMPIA waves her hand to ARNOLD with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.]

Arn. Eternal God!

I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.

Cas. *[approaches].* I am here.

Arn. Thou! but oh, save her!

Cas. *[assisting him to raise OLIMPIA].*
She hath done it well!

The leap was serious.

Arn. Oh! she is lifeless!

Cas. If

She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.

Arn. Slave!

Cas. Ay, slave or master, 'tis all one:
methinks

Good words, however, are as well at times.

Arn. Words!—Canst thou aid her?

Cas. I will try. A sprinkling

Of that same holy water may be useful.

[He brings some in his helmet from the font.]

Arn. 'Tis mix'd with blood.

Cas. There is no cleaner now

In Rome.

Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how
lifeless!

Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!

Cas. Even so Achilles loved

Penthesilea: with his form it seems 145
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

Arn. She breathes! But no, 'twas
nothing, or the last

Faint flutter life disputes with death.

Cas. She breathes.

Arn. Thou say'st it? Then 'tis truth.

Cas. You do me right—

The devil speaks truth much oftener than
he's deem'd: 150

He hath an ignorant audience.

Arn. *[without attending to him].* Yes!
her heart beats.

Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wish'd to beat with mine should
vibrate

To an assassin's pulse.

Cas. A sage reflection,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall
we bear her? 155

I say she lives.

And will she live?

Cas. As much

As dust can.

Arn. Then she is dead!

Cas. Bah! bah! You are so,

And do not know it. She will come to life—
Such as you think so, such as you now are:
But we must work by human means.

Arn. We will 160

Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitch'd my banner.

Cas. Come then! raise her up!

Arn. Softly!

Cas. As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the
jolting.

Arn. But doth she live indeed?

Cas. Nay, never fear! 165

But, if you rue it after, blame not me.

Arn. Let her but live!

Cas. The spirit of her life

Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all

things,

And this is a new office:—'tis not oft 170
I am employ'd in such; but you perceive

How stanch a friend is what you call a
fiend.

On earth you have often only fiends for
friends;

Now I desert not mine. Soft! bear her
hence,

The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamour'd of her, as 176

Of old the angels of her earliest sex.

Arn. Thou!

Cas. I! But fear not. I'll not be
your rival.

Arn. Rival!

Cas. I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of 180

Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have

laid

Aside intrigue: 'tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or—what is more difficult—

Getting rid of your prize again; for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.

SCENE III]

Arn. Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes
open!

Cæs. Like stars, no doubt; for that's a
metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn. To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!

Cæs. Oh! I know
My way through Rome.

Arn. Now onward, onward! Gently!
[*Exeunt, bearing OLIMPIA. The scene
closes.*]

PART III

SCENE I.—*A Castle in the Apennines, sur-
rounded by a wild but smiling Country.
Chorus of Peasants singing before the
Gates.*

Chorus.

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

The spring is come; the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her
bower, 10
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues. 16

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December—
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthen'd hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget 21
The virgin—virgin violet.

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Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. [singing]. The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle. 25
The casque's on the wall.
There's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall. 30
He drinks—but what's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-
death call.

Chorus.

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar's in the wood, 35
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble 40
With birds from their nest.

Cæs. Oh! shadow of glory!
Dim image of war!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star, 45
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young, 50
In the pride of his might,
Then 'twas sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;
To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine 56
At the foaming behemoth;
While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first-born of Nature, 60
And, like her, sublime!

Chorus.

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home; 65
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every
voice! [*Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.*]

BEPPPO

A VENETIAN STORY

Rosalind. Farewell, Monseieur Traveller: Look you lisp, and wear strange suits: disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your Nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think that you have swam in a *Gondola*.—*As You Like It*, Act IV., Scene I.

Annotation of the Commentators.

That is, been at *Venice*, which was much visited by the young English gentlemen of those times, and was then what *Paris* is now—the seat of all dissoluteness.—S.A.

I

'Tis known, at least it should be, that
throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes
about,
The people take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank, or low their
station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking,
masking,
And other things which may be had for
asking.

II

The moment night with dusky mantle
covers
The skies (and the more duskily the
better),
The time less liked by husbands than by
lovers
Begins, and prudery flings aside her
fetter;
And gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the gallants who beset
her;
And there are songs and quavers, roaring,
humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strum-
ming.

III

And there are dresses splendid, but fan-
tastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks
and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats
gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and
Hindoos;
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
All people, as their fancies hit, may
choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the
clergy,—
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I
charge ye.

IV

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,
Instead of coat and smallclothes, than
put on
A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the
fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's
bubble
That boil'd your bones, unless you paid
them double.

V

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
You like by way of doublet, cape, or
cloak,
Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Rag
Fair,
Would rig you out in seriousness or
joke;
And even in Italy such places are,
With prettier name in softer accents
spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that's called 'Piazza' in Great
Britain.

VI

This feast is named the Carnival, which
being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh':
So call'd, because the name and thing
agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt
and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much
glee in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'Tis as we take a glass with friends at
parting,
In the stage-coach or packet, just at start-
ing.

VII

And thus they bid farewell to carnal
dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced rag-
outs,
To live for forty days on ill-dress'd fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their
stews;
A thing which causes many 'poohs' and
'pishes,'
And several oaths (which would not
suit the Muse),
From travellers accustom'd from a boy
To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy;

VIII

And therefore humbly I would recom-
mend
'The curious in fish-sauce,' before they
cross
The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or
friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in
gross
(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss)
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or by the Lord! a Lent will well nigh
starve ye;

IX

That is to say, if your religion's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans
do,
According to the proverb,—although no
man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman,
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout—
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be
coarse,
But that's the penalty, to say no worse.

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and
ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery,
and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore,—
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI

They've pretty faces yet, those same Vene-
tians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet ex-
pressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the
Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimick'd ill;

And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best's at Florence—see it, if ye
will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Gior-
gione,

XII

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their
best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'Tis but a portrait of his son, and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been
the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or
steal,
Were't not impossible, besides a shame:
The face recalls some face, as 'twere with
pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see
again.

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when
we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every
face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The youth, the bloom, the beauty which
agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor
shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty's sometimes best set off
afar),
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er
the bar;
And truth to say, they're mostly very
pretty,
And rather like to show it, more's the
pity!

BEPPPO

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a
letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mer-
curies,
Who do such things because they know
no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may
arise,
When love links two young people in
one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Eloppements, broken vows, and hearts, and
heads.

XVII

Shakspeare described the sex in Desde-
mona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never
known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could
inflamm
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a 'cavalier servente.'

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's,
Which smother women in a bed of
feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows,
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I'll describe it you
exactly:
'Tis a long cover'd boat that's common here
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but
compactly,
Row'd by two rowers, each call'd 'Gon-
dolier,'
It glides along the water looking blackly.
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say
or do.

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe,—
But not to them do woeful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's
done.

XXI

But to my story.—'Twas some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The Carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

She was not old, nor young, nor at the
years
Which certain people call a 'certain age,'
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on
page,
The period meant precisely by that word,—
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII

Laura was blooming still, had made the
best
Of time, and time return'd the compli-
ment,
And treated her genteelly, so that, dress'd,
She look'd extremely well where'er she
went;
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely
bent;
Indeed, she shone all smiles, and seem'd to
flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking
at her.

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient,
Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more
lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal
cool),
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

Her husband sail'd upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other
seas,
And when he lay in quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her high-
est attic,
For thence she could discern the ship
with ease:
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, call'd more briefly,
Beppo.

XXVI

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-
yard,
He was a person both of sense and
vigour—
A better seaman never yet did man yard;
And she, although her manners show'd
no rigour,
Was deem'd a woman of the strictest
principle,
So much as to be thought almost invin-
cible.

XXVII

But several years elapsed since they had
met;
Some people thought the ship was lost,
and some
That he had somehow blunder'd into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering
home;
And there were several offer'd any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not
come;
For most men (till by losing render'd
sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII

'Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite pro-
phetic,
That they should never more each other
see,
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or
three.)
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad
knee
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well
she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at
night;
She deem'd the window-frames and shut-
ters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
And so she thought it prudent to connect
her
With a vice-husband, chiefly to protect her.

She chose, (and what is there they will not
choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?)
Till Beppo should return from his long
cruise,

And bid once more her faithful heart re-
joice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse—
A coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as
quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality.

XXXI

And then he was a Count, and then he
knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French
and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you,
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a critic upon operas, too,
And knew all niceties of the sock and
buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried 'secca-
tura!'

XXXII

His 'bravo' was decisive, for that sound
Hush'd 'Academie' sigh'd in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he look'd around,
For fear of some false note's detected
flaw;
The 'prima donna's' tuneful heart would
bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his
'bah!'
Soprano, basso, even the contra-alto,
Wish'd him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some
stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell
a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the
dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which
France has;
In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
And to his very valet seem'd a hero.

XXXIV

Then he was faithful too, as well as amor-
ous;
So that no sort of female could com-
plain,
Although they're now and then a little
clamorous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most
enamoured us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain:
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they
cool.

BEPPO

XXXV

No wonder such accomplishments should turn

A female head, however sage and steady—

With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,

In law he was almost as good as dead, he Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,

And she had waited several years already;

And really if a man won't let us know That he's alive, he's *dead*, or should be so.

XXXVI

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman, (Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin,)

'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men; I can't tell who first brought the custom in,

But 'Cavalier Serventes' are quite common,

And no one notices nor cares a pin;

And we may call this (not to say the worst) A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII

The word was formerly a 'Cicisbeo,'

But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;

The Spaniards call the person a 'Cortejo,' For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;

In short, it reaches from the Po to Teio, And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea sent:

But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!

Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII

However, I still think, with all due deference

To the fair *single* part of the creation,

That married ladies should preserve the preference

In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation—

And this I say without peculiar reference To England, France, or any other nation—

Because they know the world, and are at case,

And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX

'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,

But shy and awkward at first coming out,

So much alarm'd, that she is quite alarming,

All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness, and half Pout;

And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's harm in

What you, she, it, or they, may be about, The nursery still slips out in all they utter—

Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL

But 'Cavalier Servente' is the phrase

Used in politest circles to express

This supernumerary slave, who stays

Close to the lady as a part of dress,

Her word the only law which he obeys.

His is no sinecure, as you may guess;

Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,

And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,

That Italy's a pleasant place to me,

Who love to see the Sun shine every day,

And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree

Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play,

Or melodrame, which people flock to see,

When the first act is ended by a dance

In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,

Without being forced to bid my groom be sure

My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,

Because the skies are not the most secure;

I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route,

Where the green alleys windingly allure,

Reeling with grapes red waggons choke the way,—

In England 't would be lung, dust, or a dray.

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,

To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise tomorrow,

Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as

A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,

But with all Heaven t' himself; the day will break as

Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow

That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers

Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female
mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the
sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunt-
ing guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and
sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy
bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a
volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melan-
choly,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid
glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can
desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us?—in what
guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the
lyre,
Would *words* describe thy past and present
glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII

'England! with all thy faults I love thee
still,'
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've
got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year,
And so God save the Regent, Church, and
King!
Which means that I like all and everything.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded sea-
men,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the
nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we are free
men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the
Tories.

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too dis-
please—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

LI

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I
scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world de-
lighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western senti-
mentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism!

LII

But I am but a nameless sort of person,
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels)
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling
verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse
on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here goes.

LIII

The Count and Laura made their new
arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements some-
times do,
For half a dozen years without estrange-
ment;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any
change meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of
squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

BEPP0

LIV

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
 As happy as unlawful love could make
 them;
 The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
 Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth
 while to break them;
 The world beheld them with indulgent air;
 The pious only wish'd 'the devil take
 them!'
 He took them not; he very often waits,
 And leaves old sinners to be young ones'
 baits.

LV

But they were young: Oh! what without
 our youth
 Would love be! What would youth be
 without love!
 Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour,
 truth,
 Heart, soul, and all that seems as from
 above;
 But, languishing with years, it grows un-
 couth—
 One of few things experience don't im-
 prove,
 Which is, perhaps, the reason why old
 fellows
 Are always so preposterously jealous.

It was the Carnival, as I have said
 Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
 Laura the usual preparations made,
 Which you do when your mind's made
 up to go
 To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
 Spectator, or partaker in the show;
 The only difference known between the
 cases
 Is—*here*, we have six weeks of 'varnish'd
 faces.'

LVI

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
 A pretty woman as was ever seen,
 Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
 Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
 With all the fashions which the last month
 wore,
 Colour'd, and silver paper leaved be-
 tween
 That and the title-page, for fear the press
 Should soil with parts of speech the parts
 of dress.

LVII

They went to the Ridotto;—'tis a hall
 Where people dance, and sup, and dance
 again;
 Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued
 ball,

But that's of no importance to my
 strain;
 'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
 Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain;
 The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I
 quote is
 As much as saying they're below your
 notice);

LIX

For a 'mix'd company' implies that, save
 Yourself and friends, and half a hun-
 dred more,
 Whom you may bow to without looking
 grave,
 The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
 Of public places, where they basely brave
 The fashionable stare of twenty score
 Of well-bred persons, call'd '*The World*;
 ' but I,
 Although I know them, really don't know
 why.

LX

This is the case in England; at least was
 During the dynasty of Dandies, now
 Perchance succeeded by some other class
 Of imitated imitators:—how
 Irreparably soon decline, alas!
 The demagogues of fashion: all below
 Is frail; how easily the world is lost
 By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

LXI

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern
 Thor,
 Who knock'd his army down with icy
 hammer,
 Stopp'd by the *elements*, like a whaler, or
 A blundering novice in his new French
 grammar;
 Good cause had he to doubt the chance of
 war,
 And as for Fortune—but I dare not
 d—n her,
 Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
 The more I should believe in her divinity.

LXII

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
 She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and
 marriage;
 I cannot say that she's done much for me
 yet;
 Not that I mean her bounties to dis-
 parage,
 We've not yet closed accounts, and we
 shall see yet
 How much she'll make amends for past
 miscarriage.
 Meantime the Goddess I'll no more impor-
 tune,
 Unless to thank her when she's made my
 fortune.

LXIII

To turn,—and to return;—the devil take it!
 This story slips for ever through my
 fingers,
 Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
 It needs must be, and so it rather lingers:
 This form of verse began, I can't well
 break it,
 But must keep time and tune like public
 singers;
 But if I once get through my present measure,
 I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

LXIV

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
 To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
 Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
 Because I'm rather hippish, and may
 borrow
 Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
 May lurk beneath each mask; and as
 my sorrow
 Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or
 find,
 Something shall leave it half an hour
 behind).

LXV

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
 Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her
 lips;
 To some she whispers, others speaks
 aloud;
 To some she curtsies, and to some she
 dips,
 Complains of warmth, and this complaint
 avow'd,
 Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
 She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
 Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI

One has false curls, another too much
 paint,
 A third—where did she buy that fright-
 ful turban?
 A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to
 faint,
 A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and
 suburban,
 A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
 A seventh's thin muslin surely will be
 her bane,
 And lo! an eighth appears,—'I'll see no
 more!
 For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach
 a score.

LXVII

Meantime, while she was thus at others
 gazing,
 Others were levelling their looks at her;
 She heard the men's half-whisper'd mode
 of praising,

And, till 'twas done, determined not to
 stir;

The women only thought it quite amazing
 That, at her time of life, so many were
 Admirers still,—but men are so debased,
 Those brazen creatures always suit their
 taste.

LXVIII

For my part, now, I ne'er could under-
 stand
 Why naughty women—but I won't dis-
 cuss
 A thing which is a scandal to the land,
 I only don't see why it should be thus;
 And if I were but in a gown and band,
 Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
 I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and
 Romilly
 Should quote in their next speeches from
 my homily.

LXIX

While Laura thus was seen, and seeing,
 smiling,
 Talking, she knew not why, and cared
 not what,
 So that her female friends, with envy broil-
 ing,
 Beheld her airs and triumph, and all
 that;
 And well-dress'd males still kept before
 her filing,
 And passing bow'd and mingled with
 her chat;
 More than the rest one person seem'd to
 stare
 With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
 And Laura saw him, and at first was
 glad,
 Because the Turks so much admire philo-
 gyny,
 Although their usage of their wives is
 sad;
 'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
 Poor woman, whom they purchase like
 a pad;
 They have a number, though they ne'er
 exhibit 'em,
 Four wives by law, and concubines 'ad
 libitum.'

LXXI

They lock them up, and veil, and guard
 them daily,
 They scarcely can behold their male re-
 lations,
 So that their moments do not pass so gaily
 As is supposed the case with northern
 nations;

BEPPO

Confinement, too, must make them look
quite palely;
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either pass'd in doing
nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and
clothing.

LXXXII

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in
criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the
muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, re-
views,—
In harems learning soon would make a
pretty schism,
But luckily these beauties are no 'Blues';
No bustling Botherbys have they to show
'em
'That charming passage in the last new
poem:'

LXXXIII

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small 'Triton of the minnows,' the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a
fool!

LXXXIV

A stalking oracle of awful phrase.
The approving 'Good!' (by no means
good in law,)
Humming like flies around the newest
blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with
praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by
letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were
better.

LXXXV

One hates an author that's *all author*,
fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous.
One don't know what to say to them, or
think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcomby's worst coxcombs e'en
the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the mid-
night taper.

LXXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world
like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better
brothers,
Who think of something else besides the

But for the children of the 'mighty mo-
ther's,'
The would-be wits, and can't-be gentle-
men,
I leave them to their daily tea is ready,'
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXXVII

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I
mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant
people,
And one would seem to them a new inven-
tion,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish
steeple;
I think 'twould almost be worth while to
pension
(Though best-sown projects very often
reap ill)
A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXXVIII

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and stric-
tures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pic-
tures;
They stare not on the stars from out their
attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathe-
matics.

LXXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great
matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt sup-
pose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly
flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in
prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one
grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold,
though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX

Oh, mirth and innocence! Oh, milk and water!

Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,

I love you both, and both shall have my praise:

Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar candy!—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,

Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,

Which seems to say, 'Madam, I do you honour,

And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay.'

Could staring win a woman, this had won her,

But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle

Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII

The morning now was on the point of breaking,

A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking

In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking

The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,

His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stay'd them over for some silly reason,

And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season,

And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,

Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,

I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

LXXXIV

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was nought to me

More than that patent work of God's invention,

A charming woman, whom we like to

But writing names would merit reprehension,

Yet if you like to find out this fair *she*,
At the next London or Parisian ball

You still may mark her cheek out-blooming all.

LXXXV

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting

Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;

The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,

And they the room were on the point of quitting,

When lo! those cursed gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI

In this they're like our coachmen, and the cause

Is much the same—the crowd, and pulling, hauling,

With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,

They make a never intermitted bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen keep the laws,

And here a sentry stands within your calling;

But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,

And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,

Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, beside;

Some little scandals eke; but all aghast
(As to their palace-stairs the rowers glide)

Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her.

LXXXVIII

'Sir,' said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,

'Your unexpected presence here will make

It necessary for myself to crave
Its import? But perhaps 'tis a mistake;

I hope it is so; and, at once to waive
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;

You understand my meaning, or you *shall*.
'Sir' (quoth the Turk), 'tis no mistake at all:

BEPPPO

LXXXIX

'That lady is my wife!' Much wonder paints
The lady's changing cheek, as well it
might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes
faints,
Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or
quite;
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and
sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC

She said,—what could she say? Why, not
a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeased by what he
heard:
'Such things, perhaps, we'd best discuss
within,'
Said he; 'don't let us make ourselves absurd
In public, by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole trans-
action.'

XCII

They enter'd, and for coffee call'd—it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians
both,
Although the way they make it's not the
same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries 'Beppo! what's your pagan
name?
Bless me! your beard is of amazing
growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong?

XCIII

'And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I'm
alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no
pork.
And how so many years did you con-
trive
To—Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your
liver?

XCIII

'Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you
not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day
older:
Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot—
Pray don't you think the weather here
is colder?

How do I look? You shan't stir from this
spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some
beholder
Should find you out, and make the story
known.
How short your hair is! Lord! how grey
it's grown!

XCIV

What answer Beppo made to these de-
mands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and
nothing stands;
Became a slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some
bands
Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He join'd the rogues and prosper'd, and
became
A renegade of indifferent fame.

XCIV

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew
so
Keen the desire to see his home again,
He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the main;
Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from
Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with
tobacco.

XCVI

Himself, and much (Heaven knows how
gotten!) cash,
He then embark'd, with risk of life and
limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt
was rash;
He said that *Providence* protected him—
For my part, I say nothing—lest we clash
In our opinions:—well, the ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape
Bonn.

XCVII

They reach'd the island, he transferr'd his
lading
And self and livestock to another bottom,
And pass'd for a true Turkey-merchant,
trading
With goods of various names, but I've
forgot 'em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have
shot him;
And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian
name.

XCVIII

His wife received, the patriarch re-baptized him
(He made the church a present, by the way);
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrow'd the Count's smallclothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories—but I don't believe the half of them.

XCIX

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age
With wealth and talking made him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I've heard the Count and he were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'Tis to be wish'd it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

DON JUAN

'Difficile est propriè communia dicere.'—HORACE.

'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth, too!'—SHAKESPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will*.

CANTO THE FIRST*

FRAGMENT

On the back of the Poet's MS. of Canto I.
I WOULD to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were pass'd away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter—
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda-water!

DEDICATION

I

BOB SOUTHEY! You're a poet—Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 'tis true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last,—yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like 'four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;
* [Begun at Venice September 6; finished Nov. 1, 1818.—B.]

II

'Which pye being open'd they began to sing,
(This old song and new simile holds good),
'A dainty dish to set before the King,'
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food;—
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,—
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob!

IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long 'Excursion'
(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;

'Tis poetry—at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star
rages—
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

v

You—Gentlemen! by dint of long exclusion
From better company, have kept your
own
At Keswick, and, through still continued
fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have
grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you'd change your
lakes for ocean.

vi

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been
its price.
You have your salary: was't for that you
wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the
Excise.
You're shabby fellows—true—but poets
still,
And duly seated on the immortal hill.

vii

Your bays may hide the baldness of your
brows—
Perhaps some virtuous blushes;—let
them go—
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs—
And for the fame you would engross
below,
The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent
glow:
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and
Crabbe, will try
'Gainst you the question with posterity.

viii

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian
Muses,
Contend not with you on the winged
steed,
I wish your fate may yield ye, when she
chooses,
The fame you envy, and the skill you
need;
And recollect a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.

ix

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright
reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it, he
Being only injured by his own assertion;
And although here and there some
glorious rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea's immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To—God knows where—for no one else
can know.

x

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appealed to the Avenger, Time,
If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word 'Miltonic' mean
'sublime,'
He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

xi

Think'st thou, could he—the blind Old
Man—arise,
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze
once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless
eyes,
And heartless daughters—worn—and
pale—and poor;
Would he adore a sultan? he obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

xii

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid mis-
creant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's
gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vilest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

xiii

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably—legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not
praise,
Nor foes—all nations—condescend to
smile;
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can
blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless
toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a
notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind
Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd, and thoughts to be confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made—
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind—
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters,—blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless—because no feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

XVI

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds,
For I will never *feel* them;—Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed
o'er thee—
Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices—tongues to cry aloud for me,
Europe has slaves, allies, kings, armies still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVII

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'Tis that I still retain my 'buff and blue';
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite Herculean:
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

VENICE, September 16, 1818.

I

I WANT a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth
a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one:
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend
Don Juan—
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

II

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe,
Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne,
Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign-posts then, like
Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, 'nine farrow' of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumas
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

III

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Pétion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

IV

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'Tis with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd,
Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

V

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten:—I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan.

VI

Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res'
(Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before—by way of episode,

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

VII

That is the usual method, but not mine—
My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design
Forbids all wandering as the worst of
sinning,
And therefore I shall open with a line
(Although it cost me half an hour in
spinning)
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you'd rather.

VIII

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women—he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb—and I quite agree;
Of all the Spanish towns is none more
pretty,
Cadiz, perhaps—but that you soon may
see:—

Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and call'd the Guadal-
quivir.

IX

His father's name was José—*Don*, of
course,
A true Hidalgo, free from every stain
Of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his
source
Through the most Gothic gentlemen of
Spain;
A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
Or, being mounted, e'er got down again,
Than José, who begot our hero, who
Begot—but that's to come—Well, to
renew:

X

His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science
known—
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone:
She made the cleverest people quite
ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy
groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that
she did.

XI

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
All Calderon and greater part of Lope,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
She could have served him for the
prompter's copy;

For her Feinagle's were an useless art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop
—he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna
Inez.

XII

Her favourite science was the mathe-
matical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanim-
ity;
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was
Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sub-
limity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what
I call
A prodigy—her morning dress was
dimity,
Her evening silk, or, in the summer,
muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay
puzzling.

XIII

She knew the Latin—that is, 'the Lord's
prayer,'
And Greek—the alphabet—I'm nearly
sure;
She read some French romances here and
there,
Although her mode of speaking was not
pure;
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a
problem,
As if she deem'd that mystery would en-
noble 'em.

XIV

She liked the English and the Hebrew
tongue,
And said there was analogy between
'em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those
who've seen 'em,
But this I heard her say, and can't be wrong,
And all may think which way their judg-
ments lean 'em,
"Tis strange—the Hebrew noun which
means "I am,"
The English always use to govern d—n.'

XV

Some women use their tongues—she
look'd a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a
homily,
An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel
Romilly,

The Law's expounder, and the State's corrector,

Whose suicide was almost an anomaly—
One sad example more, that 'All is vanity,'—

(The jury brought their verdict in 'Insanity'.)

XVI

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from
their covers,

Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or 'Cælebs' Wife' set out in quest of
lovers,

Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let 'female errors fall,'
For she had not even one—the worst of all.

XVII

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel—
Of any modern female saint's comparison;

So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his
garrison;

Even her minutest motions went as well
As those of the best time-piece made by
Harrison:

In virtues nothing earthly could surpass her,
Save thine 'incomparable oil,' Macassar!

XVIII

Perfect she was, but as perfection is
Insidip in this naughty world of ours,
Where our first parents never learn'd to
kiss

Till they were exiled from their earlier
bowers,

Where all was peace, and innocence, and
bliss

(I wonder how they got through the
twelve hours),

Don José, like a lineal son of Eve,
Went plucking various fruit without her
leave.

XIX

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
With no great love for learning, or the
learn'd,

Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;

The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd,
Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said
two,

But for domestic quarrels one will do.

XX

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good
qualities;

Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
And such, indeed, she was in her moral-
ities;

But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with
realities,

And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a sc

XXI

This was an easy matter with a man
Oft in the wrong, and never on his
guard;

And even the wisest, do the best they can,
Have moments, hours, and days, so un-
prepared,

That you might 'brain them with their
lady's fan';

And sometimes ladies hit exceeding
hard,

And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one under-
stands.

XXII

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well born and
bred,

Grow tired of scientific conversation;
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly have they not hen-peck'd
you all?

XXIII

Don José and his lady quarrell'd—why,
Not any of the many could divine,

Though several thousand people chose to
try,

'Twas surely no concern of theirs nor
mine;

I loathe that low vice—curiosity;
But if there's anything in which I shine,
'Tis in arranging all my friends' affairs,
Not having, of my own, domestic cares.

And so I interfered, and with the best
Intentions, but their treatment was not
kind;

I think the foolish people were possess'd,
For neither of them could I ever find,
Although their porter afterwards con-
fess'd—

But that's no matter, and the worst's
behind,

For little Juan o'er me threw, down stairs,
A pail of housemaid's water unawares.

XXV

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
 And mischief-making monkey from his
 birth;
 His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
 Upon the most unquiet imp on earth;
 Instead of quarrelling, had they been but
 both in
 Their senses, they'd have sent young
 master forth
 To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at
 home,
 To teach him manners for the time to
 come.

XXVI

Don José and the Donna Inez led
 For some time an unhappy sort of life,
 Wishing each other, not divorced, but
 dead;
 They lived respectably as man and wife,
 Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
 And gave no outward signs of inward
 strife,
 Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
 And put the business past all kind of doubt.

XXVII

For Inez call'd some druggists and physicians,
 And tried to prove her loving lord was
mad,
 But as he had some lucid intermissions,
 She next decided he was only *bad*;
 Yet when they ask'd her for her depositions,
 No sort of explanation could be had,
 Save that her duty both to man and God
 Required this conduct—which seem'd very
 odd.

XXVIII

She kept a journal, where his faults were
 noted,
 And open'd certain trunks of books and
 letters,
 All which might, if occasion served, be
 quoted;
 And then she had all Seville for abettors,
 Besides her good old grandmother (who
 doted);
 The hearers of her case became re-
 peaters,
 Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,
 Some for amusement, others for old
 grudges.

XXIX

And then this best and meekest woman
 bore
 With such serenity her husband's woes,
 Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
 Who saw their spouses kill'd, and nobly
 chose

Never to say a word about them more—
 Calmly she heard each calumny that
 rose,
 And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,
 That all the world exclaim'd, 'What mag-
 nanimity!'

XXX

No doubt this patience, when the world is
 damning us,
 Is philosophic in our former friends;
 'Tis also pleasant to be deem'd magnani-
 mous,
 The more so in obtaining our own ends;
 And what the lawyers call a '*malus*
animus'
 Conduct like this by no means compre-
 hends:
 Revenge in person's certainly no virtue,
 But then 'tis not *my* fault, if *others* hurt
 you.

XXXI

And if our quarrels should rip up old
 stories,
 And help them with a lie or two addi-
 tional,
 I'm not to blame, as you well know—no
 more is
 Any one else—they were become tradi-
 tional;
 Besides, their resurrection aids our glories
 By contrast, which is what we just were
 wishing all:
 And science profits by this resurrection—
 Dead scandals form good subjects for dis-
 section.

XXXII

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
 Then their relations, who made matters
 worse,
 ('Twere hard to tell upon a like occasion
 To whom it may be best to have re-
 course—
 I can't say much for friend or yet relation):
 The lawyers did their utmost for divorce,
 But scarce a fee was paid on either side
 Before, unluckily, Don José died.

XXXIII

He died: and most unluckily, because,
 According to all hints I could collect
 From counsel learned in those kinds of
 laws
 (Although their talk's obscure and cir-
 cumspect),
 His death contrived to spoil a charming
 cause;
 A thousand pities also with respect
 To public feeling, which on this occasion
 Was manifested in a great sensation.

XXXIV

But ah! he died; and buried with him lay
 The public feeling and the lawyers' fees:
 His house was sold, his servants sent
 away,
 A Jew took one of his two mistresses,
 A priest the other—at least so they say:
 I ask'd the doctors after his disease—
 He died of the slow fever called the
 tertian,
 And left his widow to her own aversion.

XXXV

Yet José was an honourable man,
 That I must say, who knew him very
 well;
 Therefore his frailties I'll no further scan,
 Indeed there were not many more to
 tell:
 And if his passions now and then outran
 Discretion, and were not so peaceable
 As Numa's (who was also named Pompi-
 lius),
 He had been ill brought up, and was born
 bilious.

XXXVI

Whate'er might be his worthlessness or
 worth,
 Poor fellow! he had many things to
 wound him,
 Let's own—since it can do no good on
 earth—
 It was a trying moment that which
 found him
 Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
 Where all his household gods lay
 shiver'd round him:
 No choice was left his feelings or his pride,
 Save death or Doctors' Commons—so he
 died.

XXXVII

Dying intestate, Juan was sole heir
 To a chancery suit, and messuages and
 lands,
 Which, with a long minority and care,
 Promised to turn out well in proper
 hands:
 Inez became sole guardian, which was fair,
 And answer'd but to nature's just de-
 mands;
 An only son left with an only mother
 Is brought up much more wisely than
 another.

XXXVIII

Sagest of women, even of widows, she
 Resolved that Juan should be quite a
 paragon,
 And worthy of the noblest pedigree:
 (His sire was of Castile, his dam from
 Aragon).

Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
 In case our lord the king should go to
 war again,
 He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gun-
 nery,
 And how to scale a fortress—or a nunnery.

XXXIX

But that which Donna Inez most desired,
 And saw into herself each day before all
 The learned tutors whom for him she
 hired,
 Was, that his breeding should be strictly
 moral:
 Much into all his studies she inquired,
 And so they were submitted first to her,
 all,
 Arts, sciences, no branch was made a
 mystery
 To Juan's eyes, excepting natural history.

XL

The languages, especially the dead,
 The sciences, and most of all the
 abstruse,
 The arts, at least all such as could be said
 To be the most remote from common
 use,
 In all these he was much and deeply read:
 But not a page of anything that's loose,
 Or hints continuation of the species,
 Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow
 vicious.

XLI

His classic studies made a little puzzle,
 Because of filthy loves of gods and god-
 desses,
 Who in the earlier ages raised a bustle,
 But never put on pantaloons or bodices;
 His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,
 And for their Æneids, Iliads, and
 Odysseys,
 Were forced to make an odd sort of
 apology,
 For Donna Inez dreaded the Mythology.

XLII

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
 Anacreon's morals are a still worse
 sample,
 Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
 I don't think Sappho's Ode a good
 example,
 Although Longinus tells us there is no
 hymn
 Where the sublime soars forth on wings
 more ample;
 But Virgil's songs are pure, except that
 horrid one
 Beginning with 'Formosum Pastor Cory-
 don.'

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

XLIII

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong
For early stomachs, to prove whole-
some food;
I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,
Although no doubt his real intent was
good,
For speaking out so plainly in his song,
So much indeed as to be downright
rude;
And then what proper person can be
partial
To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?

XLIV

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
Expurgated by learned men, who place,
Judiciously, from out the schoolboy's
vision,
The grosser parts; but, fearful to deface
Too much their modest bard by this
omission,
And pitying sore this mutilated case,
They only add them all in an appendix,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an
index;

XLV

For there we have them all 'at one fell
swoop,'
Instead of being scatter'd through the
pages;
They stand forth marshall'd in a handsome
troop,
To meet the ingenuous youth of future
ages,
Till some less rigid editor shall stoop
To call them back into their separate
cages,
Instead of standing staring all together,
Like garden gods—and not so decent
either.

XLVI

The Missal too (it was the family Missal)
Was ornamented in a sort of way
Which ancient mass-books often are, and
this all
Kinds of grotesques illumined; and how
they,
Who saw those figures on the margin kiss
all,
Could turn their optics to the text and
pray,
Is more than I know—But Don Juan's
mother
Kept this herself, and gave her son another.

XLVII

Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for re-
straints;

But how faith is acquired, and then in-
sured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader envy his trans-
gressions.

XLVIII

This, too, was a seal'd book to little Juan—
I can't but say that his mamma was right,
If such an education was the true one.
She scarcely trusted him from out her
sight;
Her maids were old, and if she took a new
one,
You might be sure she was a perfect
fright.
She did this during even her husband's
life—
I recommend as much to every wife.

XLIX

Young Juan wax'd in godliness and grace;
At six a charming child, and at eleven
With all the promise of as fine a face
As e'er to man's maturer growth was
given.
He studied steadily and grew apace,
And seem'd, at least, in the right road to
heaven,
For half his days were pass'd at church,
the other
Between his tutors, confessor, and mother.

L

At six, I said, he was a charming child,
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy;
Although in infancy a little wild,
They tamed him down amongst them;
to destroy
His natural spirit not in vain they toil'd,
At least it seem'd so; and his mother's
joy
Was to declare how sage, and still, and
steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already.

LI

I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still,
But what I say is neither here nor there:
I knew his father well, and have some skill
In character—but it would not be fair
From sire to son to augur good or ill:
He and his wife were an ill sorted pair—
But scandal's my aversion—I protest
Against all evil speaking, even in jest.

LII

For my part I say nothing—nothing—but
This I will say—my reasons are my
own—
That if I had an only son to put
To school (as God be praised that I have
none),

'Tis not with Donna Inez I would shut
Him up to learn his catechism alone,
No—no—I'd send him out betimes to
college,
For there it was I pick'd up my own know-
ledge.

For there one learns—'tis not for me to
boast,
Though I acquired—but I pass over
that,
As well as all the Greek I since have lost:
I say that there's the place—but '*Verb-
um sat*,'
I think I pick'd up too, as well as most,
Knowledge of matters—but no matter
what—
I never married—but, I think, I know
That sons should not be educated so.

Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit:
he seem'd
Active, though not so sprightly, as a page;
And everybody but his mother deem'd
Him almost man; but she flew in a rage
And bit her lips (for else she might have
scream'd)
If any said so, for to be precocious
Was in her eyes a thing the most atrocious.

Amongst her numerous acquaintance, all
Selected for discretion and devotion,
There was the Donna Julia, whom to call
Pretty were but to give a feeble notion
Of many charms in her as natural
As sweetness to the flower, or salt to
ocean,
Her zone to Venus, or his bow to Cupid
(But this last simile is trite and stupid).

The darkness of her Oriental eye
Accorded with her Moorish origin;
(Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by;
In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin).
When proud Granada fell, and, forced to
fly,
Boabdil wept, of Donna Julia's kin
Some went to Africa, some stay'd in Spain,
Her great great grandmamma chose to re-
main.

LVII

She married (I forget the pedigree)
With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down
His blood less noble than such blood
should be;
At such alliances his sires would frown,

In that point so precise in each degree
That they bred *in and in*, as might be
shown,
Marrying their cousins—nay, their aunts,
and nieces,
Which always spoils the breed, if it in-
creases.

LVIII

This heathenish cross restored the breed
again,
Ruin'd its blood, but much improved
its flesh;
For from a root the ugliest in old Spain
Sprung up a branch as beautiful as
fresh;
The sons no more were short, the daughters
plain:
But there's a rumour which I fain would
hush,
'Tis said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
Produced her Don more heirs at love than
law.

LIX

However this might be, the race went on
Improving still through every genera-
tion,
Until it centred in an only son,
Who left an only daughter: my narra-
tion
May have suggested that this single one
Could be but Julia (whom on this
occasion
I shall have much to speak about), and she
Was married, charming, chaste, and
twenty-three.

LX

Her eye (I'm very fond of handsome eyes)
Was large and dark, suppressing half its
fire
Until she spoke, then through its soft dis-
guise
Flash'd an expression more of pride
than ire,
And love than either; and there would
arise
A something in them which was not
desire,
But would have been, perhaps, but for the
soul
Which struggled through and chasten'd
down the whole.

LXI

Her glossy hair was cluster'd o'er a brow
Bright with intelligence, and fair, and
smooth;
Her eyebrow's shape was like the aerial
bow,
Her cheek all purple with the beam of
youth,

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

Mounting, at times, to a transparent glow,
As if her veins ran lightning; she, in
sooth,
Possess'd an air and grace by no means
common:
Her stature tall—I hate a dumpy woman.

LXII

Wedded she was some years, and to a man
Of fifty, and such husbands are in
plenty;
And yet, I think, instead of such a ONE
'Twere better to have TWO of five-and-
twenty,
Especially in countries near the sun:
And now I think on't, 'mi vien in mente,'
Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty.

LXIII

'Tis a sad thing, I cannot choose but say,
And all the fault of that indecent sun,
Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay,
But will keep baking, broiling, burning
on,
That howsoever people fast and pray,
The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:
What men call gallantry, and gods
adultery,
Is much more common where the climate's
sultry.

LXIV

Happy the nations of the moral North!
Where all is virtue, and the winter season
Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth
(‘Twas snow that brought St. Anthony
to reason);
Where juries cast up what a wife is worth,
By laying whate'er sum, in mulct, they
please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice.

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,
A man well looking for his years, and
who
Was neither much beloved nor yet
abhorr'd:
They lived together as most people do,
Suffering each other's foibles by accord,
And not exactly either *one* or *two*;
Yet he was jealous, though he did not
show it,
For jealousy dislikes the world to know it.

LXVI

Julia was—yet I never could see why—
With Donna Inez quite a favourite
friend;
Between their tastes there was small sym-
pathy,
For not a line had Julia ever penn'd:

Some people whisper (but, no doubt, they
lie,
For malice still imputes some private
end)
That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's mar-
riage,
Forgot with him her very prudent carriage;

LXVII

And that still keeping up the old con-
nexion,
Which time had lately render'd much
more chaste,
She took his lady also in affection,
And certainly this course was much the
best:
She flatter'd Julia with her sage protection,
And complimented Don Alfonso's
taste;
And if she could not (who can?) silence
scandal,
At least she left it a more slender handle.

LXVIII

I can't tell whether Julia saw the affair
With other people's eyes, or if her own
Discoveries made, but none could be
aware
Of this, at least no symptom e'er was
shown;
Perhaps she did not know, or did not care,
Indifferent from the first, or callous
grown:
I'm really puzzled what to think or say,
She kept her counsel in so close a way.

LXIX

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty child,
Caress'd him often—such a thing might
be
Quite innocently done, and harmless
styled,
When she had twenty years, and thirteen
he;
But I am not so sure I should have smiled
When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-
three;
These few short years make wondrous
alterations,
Particularly amongst sun-burnt nations.

LXX

Whate'er the cause might be, they had be-
come
Changed; for the dame grew distant, the
youth shy,
Their looks cast down, their greetings
almost dumb,
And much embarrassment in either eye;
There surely will be little doubt with some
That Donna Julia knew the reason why,
But as for Juan, he had no more notion
Than he who never saw the sea of ocean.

LXXI

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,
 And tremulously gentle her small hand
 Withdrew itself from his, but left behind
 A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland
 And slight, so very slight, that to the mind
 'Twas but a doubt; but ne'er magician's
 wand
 Wrought change with all Armida's fairy
 art
 Like what this light touch left on Juan's
 heart.

LXXII

And if she met him, though she smiled no
 more,
 She look'd a sadness sweeter than her
 smile,
 As if her heart had deeper thoughts in
 store
 She must not own, but cherish'd more
 the while
 For that compression in its burning core;
 Even innocence itself has many a wile,
 And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
 And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

LXXIII

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays
 Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky
 Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
 Its workings through the vainly guarded
 eye,
 And in whatever aspect it arrays
 Itself, 'tis still the same hypocrisy:
 Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,
 Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

LXXIV

Then there were sighs, the deeper for sup-
 pression,
 And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,
 And burning blushes, though for no trans-
 gression,
 Tremblings when met, and restlessness
 when left;
 All these are little preludes to possession,
 Of which young passion cannot be be-
 reft,
 And merely tend to show how greatly love is
 Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

LXXV

Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward
 state;
 She felt it going, and resolved to make
 The noblest efforts for herself and mate,
 For honour's, pride's, religion's, vir-
 tue's sake.
 Her resolutions were most truly great,
 And almost might have made a Tarquin
 quake:
 She pray'd the Virgin Mary for her grace,
 As being the best judge of a lady's case.

LXXVI

She vow'd she never would see Juan more,
 And next day paid a visit to his mother,
 And look'd extremely at the opening door,
 Which, by the Virgin's grace, let in
 another;
 Grateful she was, and yet a little sore—
 Again it opens, it can be no other,
 'Tis surely Juan now—No! I'm afraid
 That night the Virgin was no further
 pray'd.

LXXVII

She now determined that a virtuous
 woman
 Should rather face and overcome
 temptation,
 That flight was base and dastardly, and no
 man
 Should ever give her heart the least sen-
 sation;
 That is to say, a thought beyond the com-
 mon
 Preference, that we must feel upon occa-
 sion,
 For people who are pleasanter than others,
 But then they only seem so many brothers.

LXXVIII

And even if by chance—and who can tell?
 The devil's so very sly—she should dis-
 cover
 That all within was not so very well,
 And, if still free, that such or such a
 lover
 Might please perhaps, a virtuous wife can
 quell
 Such thoughts, and be the better when
 they're over;
 And if the man should ask, 'tis but denial:
 I recommend young ladies to make trial.

LXXIX

And then there are such things as love
 divine,
 Bright and immaculate, unmix'd and
 pure,
 Such as the angels think so very fine,
 And matrons, who would be no less
 secure,
 Platonic, perfect, 'just such love as mine':
 Thus Julia said—and thought so, to be
 sure;
 And so I'd have her think, were I the man
 On whom her reveries celestial ran.

LXXX

Such love is innocent, and may exist
 Between young persons without any
 danger:
 A hand may first, and then a lip be kist;
 For my part, to such doings I'm a
 stranger,

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

But *hear* these freedoms form the utmost
list

Of all o'er which such love may be a
ranger:

If people go beyond, 'tis quite a crime,
But not my fault—I tell them all in time.

LXXXI

Love, then, but love within its proper
limits

Was Julia's innocent determination
In young Don Juan's favour, and to him
its

Exertion might be useful on occasion;
And, lighted at too pure a shrine to dim its
Ethereal lustre, with what sweet persua-
sion

He might be taught, by love and her to-
gether—

I really don't know what, nor Julia either.

LXXXII

Fraught with this fine intention, and well
fenced

In mail of proof—her purity of soul,
She, for the future of her strength con-
vinced,

And that her honour was a rock, or mole,
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
With any kind of troublesome control;
But whether Julia to the task was equal
Is that which must be mention'd in the
sequel.

LXXXIII

Her plan she deem'd both innocent and
feasible,

And, surely, with a stripling of sixteen
Not scandal's fangs could fix on much
that's seizable,

Or if they did so, satisfied to mean
Nothing but what was good, her breast
was peaceable:

A quiet conscience makes one so serene!
Christians have burnt each other, quite
persuaded

That all the Apostles would have done as
they did.

LXXXIV

And if in the mean time her husband died,
But Heaven forbid that such a thought
should cross

Her brain, though in a dream! (and then
she sigh'd)

Never could she survive that common
loss;

But just suppose that moment should be-
tide,

I only say suppose it—*inter nos*.
(This should be *entre nous*, for Julia
thought

In French, but then the rhyme would go
for nought.)

LXXXV

I only say, suppose this supposition:
Juan being then grown up to man's
estate

Would fully suit a widow of condition,
Even seven years hence it would not be
too late;

And in the interim (to pursue this vision)
The mischief, after all, could not be
great,

For he would learn the rudiments of love,
I mean the seraph way of those above.

LXXXVI

So much for Julia. Now we'll turn to Juan.

Poor little fellow! he had no idea
Of his own case, and never hit the true one;
In feelings quick as Ovid's Miss Medea,
He puzzled over what he found a new one,
But not as yet imagined it could be a
Thing quite in course, and not at all alarm-
ing,

Which, with a little patience, might grow
charming.

Silent and pensive, idle, restless, slow,
His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tormented with a wound he could not
know,

His, like all deep grief, plunged in soli-
tude:

I'm fond myself of solitude or so,
But then, I beg it may be understood,
By solitude I mean a Sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a haram for a grot.

'Oh Love! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art a god indeed divine.'
The bard I quote from does not sing amiss,
With the exception of the second line,
For that same twining 'transport and
security'

Are twisted to a phrase of some obscurity.

LXXXVII

The poet meant, no doubt, and thus ap-
peals

To the good sense and senses of man-
kind,

The very thing which everybody feels,
As all have found on trial, or may find,
That no one likes to be disturb'd at meals
Or love.—I won't say more about 'en-
twined'

Or 'transport,' as we knew all that before,
But beg 'Security' will bolt the door.

XC

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,
Thinking unutterable things; he threw
Himself at length within the leafy nooks
Where the wild branch of the cork
forest grew;
There poets find materials for their books,
And every now and then we read them
through,
So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unin-
telligible.

XCI

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pur-
sued
His self-communion with his own high
soul,
Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
Had mitigated part, though not the whole
Of its disease; he did the best he could
With things not very subject to control,
And turn'd, without perceiving his con-
dition,
Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

XCII

He thought about himself, and the whole
earth,
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have
birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes,
and of wars,
How many miles the moon might have in
girth,
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless
skies;—
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

XCIII

In thoughts like these true wisdom may
discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most
part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know
not why:
'Twas strange that one so young should
thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If you think 'twas philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

XCIV

He pored upon the leaves, and on the
flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and
then
He thought of wood-nymphs and im-
mortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to
men:

He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the
hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch
again,
He found how much old Time had been a
winner—
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

XCV

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his
book,
Boscan, or Garcilasso;—by the wind
Even as the page is rustled while we look,
So by the poesy of his own mind
Over the mystic leaf his soul was shook,
As if 'twere one whereon magicians bind
Their spells, and give them to the passing
gale
According to some good old woman's tale.

XCVI

Thus would he while his lonely hours away
Dissatisfied, nor knowing what he
wanted;
Nor glowing reverie, nor poet's lay,
Could yield his spirit that for which it
panted,
A bosom whereon he his head might lay,
And hear the heart beat with the love it
granted,
With—several other things, which I for-
get,
Or which, at least, I need not mention yet.

XCVII

Those lonely walks, and lengthening reve-
ries,
Could not escape the gentle Julia's eyes;
She saw that Juan was not at his ease;
But that which chiefly may, and must
surprise,
Is, that the Donna Inez did not tease
Her only son with question or surmise;
Whether it was she did not see, or would
not,
Or, like all very clever people, could not.

XCVIII

This may seem strange, but yet 'tis very
common;
For instance—gentlemen, whose ladies
take
Leave to o'erstep the written rights of
woman,
And break the—Which command-
ment is't they break?
(I have forgot the number, and think no
man
Should rashly quote, for fear of a mis-
take.)
I say, when these same gentlemen are
jealous,
They make some blunder, which their
ladies tell us.

XCIX

A real husband always is suspicious,
 But still no less suspects in the wrong
 place,
 Jealous of some one who had no such
 wishes,
 Or pandering blindly to his own disgrace,
 By harbouring some dear friend extremely
 vicious;
 The last indeed 's infallibly the case:
 And when the spouse and friend are gone
 off wholly,
 He wonders at their vice, and not his folly.

C

Thus parents also are at times short-
 sighted;
 Though watchful as the lynx, they ne'er
 discover,
 The while the wicked world beholds de-
 lighted,
 Young Hopeful's mistress, or Miss
 Fanny's lover,
 Till some confounded escapade has blighted
 The plan of twenty years, and all is over;
 And then the mother cries, the father
 swears,
 And wonders why the devil he got heirs.

CI

But Inez was so anxious, and so clear
 Of sight, that I must think, on this occa-
 sion,
 She had some other motive much more
 near
 For leaving Juan to this new temptation,
 But what that motive was, I shan't say
 here;
 Perhaps to finish Juan's education,
 Perhaps to open Don Alfonso's eyes,
 In case he thought his wife too great a
 prize.

CII

It was upon a day, a summer's day:—
 Summer's indeed a very dangerous
 season,
 And so is spring about the end of May;
 The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing
 reason;
 But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,
 And stand convicted of more truth than
 treason,
 That there are months which nature grows
 more merry in,—
 March has its hares, and May must have
 its heroine.

CIII

'Twas on a summer's day—the sixth of
 June:—
 I like to be particular in dates,
 Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
 They are a sort of post-house, where the
 Fates

Change horses, making history change its
 tune,
 Then spur away o'er empires and o'er
 states,
 Leaving at last not much besides chrono-
 logy,
 Excepting the post-obits of theology.

CIV

'Twas on the sixth of June, about the hour
 Of half-past six—perhaps still nearer
 seven—
 When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
 As e'er held houri in that heathenish
 heaven
 Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon
 Moore,
 To whom the lyre and laurels have been
 given,
 With all the trophies of triumphant song—
 He won them well, and may he wear them
 long!

CV

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
 How this same interview had taken
 place,
 And even if I knew, I should not tell—
 People should hold their tongues in any
 case;
 No matter how or why the thing befell,
 But there were she and Juan, face to
 face—
 When two such faces are so, 'twould be
 wise,
 But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

CVI

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious
 heart
 Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no
 wrong,
 Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
 Strengthening the weak, and trampling
 on the strong!
 How self-deceitful is the sageest part
 Of mortals whom thy lure hath led
 along!—
 The precipice she stood on was immense,
 So was her creed in her own innocence.

CVII

She thought of her own strength, and
 Juan's youth,
 And of the folly of all prudish fears,
 Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
 And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
 I wish these last had not occur'd, in sooth,
 Because that number rarely much en-
 dears,
 And through all climes, the snowy and the
 sunny,
 Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in
 money.

CVIII

When people say, 'I've told you *fifty* times,'

They mean to scold, and very often do;
When poets say, 'I've written *fifty* rhymes,'

They make you dread that they'll recite them too;

In gangs of *fifty*, thieves commit their crimes;

At *fifty* love for love is rare, 'tis true,
But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.

CIX

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love

For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,

She never would disgrace the ring she wore,

Nor leave a wish which wisdom might improve;

And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,

One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake—she thought it was her own;

CX

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair;

And to contend with thoughts she could not smother

She seem'd, by the distraction of her air.

'Twas surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so—

I'm very certain *mine* would not have done

CXI

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees

Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
As if it said, 'Detain me, if you please';

Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp

His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze;
She would have shrunk as from a toad,

or asp,

Had she imagined such a thing could rouse

A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

CXII

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
But what he did, is much what you would do;

His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,

And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew

In deep despair, lest he had done amiss,—

Love is so very timid when 'tis new:

She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,

And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

CXIII

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil's in the moon for mischief;

they

Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon

Their nomenclature; there is not a day,

The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way,

On which three single hours of moonshine smile—

And then she looks so modest all the while.

CXIV

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul

To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;

The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,

Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,

Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.

CXV

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
And half retiring from the glowing arm,

Which trembled like the bosom where 'twas placed;

Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,

Or else 'twere easy to withdraw her waist;
But then the situation had its charm,

And then—God knows what next—I can't go on;

I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

CXVI

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more

Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controlless core

Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers:—You're a bore,

A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

CXVII

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;

The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,

I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion;

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose tempta-
tion;
A little still she strove, and much repented,
And whispering 'I will ne'er consent'—
consented.

CXVIII

'Tis said that Xerxes offer'd a reward
To those who could invent him a new
pleasure.
Methinks the requisition's rather hard,
And must have cost his majesty a treasure:
For my part, I'm a moderate-minded bard,
Fond of a little love (which I call leisure);
I care not for new pleasures, as the old
Are quite enough for me, so they but hold.

CXIX

Oh Pleasure! you're indeed a pleasant thing,
Although one must be damn'd for you,
no doubt:
I make a resolution every spring
Of reformation, ere the year run out,
But somehow, this my vestal vow takes
wing,
Yet still, I trust, it may be kept through-
out:
I'm very sorry, very much ashamed,
And mean, next winter, to be quite re-
claim'd.

CXX

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take—
Start not! still chaster reader—she'll be
nice hence-
Forward, and there is no great cause to
quake;
This liberty is a poetic licence,
Which some irregularity may make
In the design, and as I have a high sense
Of Aristotle and the Rules, 'tis fit
To beg his pardon when I err a bit.

CXXI

This licence is to hope the reader will
Suppose from June the sixth (the fatal
day
Without whose epoch my poetic skill
For want of facts would all be thrown
away),
But keeping Julia and Don Juan still
In sight, that several months have
pass'd; we'll say
'Twas in November, but I'm not so sure
About the day—the era's more obscure.

CXXII

We'll talk of that anon.—'Tis sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit
deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters
sweep;

'Tis sweet to see the evening star appear;
'Tis sweet to listen as the night-winds
creep
From leaf to leaf; 'tis sweet to view on
high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the
sky.

CXXIII

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest
bark
Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw
near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will
mark
Our coming, and look brighter when
we come;
'Tis sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the
hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of
birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest
words.

CXXIV

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering
grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing; sweet are our escapes
From civic revelry to rural mirth;
Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
Sweet to the father is his first-born's
birth,
Sweet is revenge—especially to women,
Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

CXXV

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who've made 'us youth' wait too—to
long already
For an estate, or cash, or country seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so
steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-
obits.

CXXVI

'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's
laurels,
By blood or ink; 'tis sweet to put an end
To strife; 'tis sometimes sweet to have our
quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy
spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are
forgot.

CXXVII

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
Is first and passionate love—it stands alone,
Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd
—all's known—
And life yields nothing further to recall
Worthy of this ambrosial sin, so shown,
No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from
heaven.

CXXVIII

Man's a strange animal, and makes
strange use
Of his own nature, and the various arts,
And likes particularly to produce
Some new experiment to show his parts;
This is the age of oddities let loose,
Where different talents find their differ-
ent marts;
You'd best begin with truth, and when
you've lost your
Labour, there's a sure market for im-
posture.

CXXIX

What opposite discoveries we have seen!
(Signs of true genius, and of empty
pockets.)
One makes new noses, one a guillotine,
One breaks your bones, one sets them
in their sockets;
But vaccination certainly has been
A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,
With which the Doctor paid off an old pox,
By borrowing a new one from an ox.

CXXX

Bread has been made (indifferent) from
potatoes;
And galvanism has set some corpses
grinning,
But has not answer'd like the apparatus
Of the Humane Society's beginning,
By which men are unsuffocated gratis:
What wondrous new machines have late
been spinning!
I said the small pox has gone out of late;
Perhaps it may be follow'd by the great.

CXXXI

'Tis said the great came from America;
Perhaps it may set out on its return,—
The population there so spreads, they say
'Tis grown high time to thin it in its
turn,
With war, or plague, or famine, any way,
So that civilisation they may learn;
And which in ravage the more loathsome
evil is—
Their real lues, or our pseudo-syphilis?

CXXXII

This is the patent age of new inventions
For killing bodies, and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions;
Sir Humphry Davy's lantern, by which
coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he men-
tions,
Tombuctoo travels, voyages to the
Poles,
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

CXXXIII

Man's a phenomenon, one knows not
what,
And wonderful beyond all wondrous
measure;
'Tis pity though, in this sublime world,
that
Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a
pleasure;
Few mortals know what end they would
be at,
But whether glory, power, or love, or
treasure,
The path is through perplexing ways, and
when
The goal is gain'd, we die, you know—
and then—

CXXXIV

What then?—I do not know, no more do
you—
And so good night.—Return we to our
story:
'Twas in November, when fine days are
few,
And the far mountains wax a little
hoary,
And clap a white cape on their mantles
blue;
And the sea dashes round the pro-
montory,
And the loud breaker boils against the
rock,
And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

CXXXV

'Twas, as the watchmen say, a cloudy
night;
No moon, no stars, the wind was low
or loud
By gusts, and many a sparkling hearth was
bright
With the piled wood, round which the
family crowd;
There's something cheerful in that sort of
light,
Even as a summer sky's without a cloud:
I'm fond of fire, and crickets, and all that,
A lobster salad, and champagne, and chat.

CXXXVI

'Twas midnight—Donna Julia was in bed,
 Sleeping, most probably,—when at her
 door
 Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
 If they had never been awake before,
 And that they have been so we all have
 read,
 And are to be so, at the least, once
 more;—
 The door was fasten'd, but with voice and
 fist
 First knocks were heard, then 'Madam—
 Madam—hist!

CXXXVII

'For God's sake, Madam—Madam—
 here's my master,
 With more than half the city at his
 back—
 Was ever heard of such a curst disaster!
 'Tis not my fault—I kept good watch—
 Alack!
 Do pray undo the bolt a little faster—
 They're on the stair just now, and in a
 crack
 Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly—
 Surely the window's not so *very* high!'

CXXXVIII

By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
 With torches, friends, and servants in
 great number;
 The major part of them had long been
 wived,
 And therefore paused not to disturb the
 slumber
 Of any wicked woman, who contrived
 By stealth her husband's temples to
 encumber:
 Examples of this kind are so contagious,
 Were *one* not punish'd, *all* would be out-
 rageous.

CXXXIX

I can't tell how, or why, or what suspicion
 Could enter into Don Alfonso's head;
 But for a cavalier of his condition
 It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
 Without a word of previous admonition,
 To hold a levee round his lady's bed,
 And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and
 sword,
 To prove himself the thing he most
 abhorr'd.

CXL

Poor Donna Julia! starting as from sleep
 (Mind—that I do not say—she had not
 slept),
 Began at once to scream, and yawn, and
 weep;
 Her maid, Antonia, who was an adept,

Contrived to fling the bed-clothes in a
 heap,
 As if she had just now from out them
 crept:
 I can't tell why she should take all this
 trouble
 To prove her mistress had been sleeping
 double.

CXLI

But Julia mistress, and Antonia maid,
 Appear'd like two poor harmless
 women, who
 Of goblins, but still more of men afraid,
 Had thought one man might be deterr'd
 by two,
 And therefore side by side were gently laid,
 Until the hours of absence should run
 through,
 And truant husband should return, and
 say,
 'My dear, I was the first who came away.'

CXLII

Now Julia found at length a voice, and
 cried,
 'In heaven's name, Don Alfonso, what
 d'ye mean?
 Has madness seized you? would that I had
 died
 Ere such a monster's victim I had been!
 What may this midnight violence betide,
 A sudden fit of drunkenness or spleen?
 Dare you suspect me, whom the thought
 would kill?
 Search, then, the room!'—Alfonso said,
 'I will.'

CXLIII

He search'd, *they* search'd, and rummaged
 everywhere,
 Closet and clothes-press, chest and
 window-seat,
 And found much linen, lace, and several
 pair
 Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs,
 complete,
 With other articles of ladies fair,
 To keep them beautiful, or leave them
 neat:
 Arras they prick'd and curtains with their
 swords,
 And wounded several shutters, and some
 boards.

CXLIV

Under the bed they search'd, and there
 they found—
 No matter what—it was not that they
 sought;
 They open'd windows, gazing if the
 ground
 Had signs or footmarks, but the earth
 said nought;

And then they stared each other's faces
round:

'Tis odd, not one of all these seekers
thought,
And seems to me almost a sort of blunder,
Of looking *in* the bed as well as under.

During this inquisition Julia's tongue
Was not asleep—'Yes, search and
search,' she cried,
'Insult on insult heap, and wrong on wrong!
It was for this that I became a bride!
For this in silence I have suffer'd long
A husband like Alfonso at my side;
But now I'll bear no more, nor here
remain,
If there be law or lawyers in all Spain.

CXLVI

'Yes, Don Alfonso! husband now no more,
If ever you indeed deserved the name,
Is't worthy of your years?—you have
threescore—

Fifty, or sixty, it is all the same—
Is't wise or fitting, causeless to explore
For facts against a virtuous woman's
fame?
Ungrateful, perjured, barbarous Don
Alfonso,
How dare you think your lady would go
on so?

CXLVII

'Is it for this I have disdain'd to hold
The common privileges of my sex?
That I have chosen a confessor so old
And deaf, that any other it would vex,
And never once he has had cause to scold,
But found my very innocence perplex
So much, he always doubted I was
married—
How sorry you will be when I've mis-
carried!

CXLVIII

'Was it for this that no Cortejo e'er
I yet have chosen from out the youth of
Seville?
Is it for this I scarce went anywhere,
Except to bull-fights, mass, play, rout,
and revel?
Is it for this, whate'er my suitors were,
I favour'd none—nay, was almost
uncivil?
Is it for this that General Count O'Reilly,
Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?

CXLIX

'Did not the Italian Musico Cazzani
Sing at my heart six months at least in
vain?
Did not his countryman, Count Corniani,
Call me the only virtuous wife in Spain?

Were there not also Russians, English,
many?

The Count Strongstroganoff I put in
pain,
And Lord Mount Coffeehouse, the Irish
peer,
Who kill'd himself for love (with wine) last
year.

CL

'Have I not had two bishops at my feet?
The Duke of Ichar, and Don Fernan
Nunez?
And is it thus a faithful wife you treat?
I wonder in what quarter now the moon
is:
I praise your vast forbearance not to beat
Me also, since the time so opportune
is—
Oh, valiant man! with sword drawn and
cock'd trigger,
Now, tell me, don't you cut a pretty
figure?

CLI

'Was it for this you took your sudden
journey,
Under pretence of business in-
dispensable,
With that sublime of rascals your attorney,
Whom I see standing there, and looking
sensible
Of having play'd the fool? though both I
spurn, he
Deserves the worst, his conduct's less
defensible,
Because, no doubt, 'twas for his dirty fee,
And not from any love to you nor me.

'If he comes here to take a deposition,
By all means let the gentleman proceed;
You've made the apartment in a fit con-
dition:—
There's pen and ink for you, sir, when
you need—
Let everything be noted with precision,
I would not you for nothing should be
fee'd—
But as my maid's undrest, pray turn your
spies out.'
'Oh! sabb'd Antonia, 'I could tear their
eyes out.'

CLII

'There is the closet, there the toilet, there
The antechamber—search them under,
over;
There is the sofa, there the great arm-
chair,
The chimney—which would really hold
a lover.

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

I wish to sleep, and beg you will take care
And make no further noise, till you
discover
The secret cavern of this lurking treasure—
And when 'tis found, let me, too, have that
pleasure.

CLIV

'And now, Hidalgo! now that you have
thrown
Doubt upon me, confusion over all,
Pray have the courtesy to make it known
Who is the man you search for? how
d'y'e call
Him? what's his lineage? let him but be
shown—
I hope he's young and handsome—is he
tall?
Tell me—and be assured, that since you
stain
Mine honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

CLV

'At least, perhaps, he has not sixty years,
At that age he would be too old for
slaughter,
Or for so young a husband's jealous
fears—
(Antonia! let me have a glass of water.)
I am ashamed of having shed these tears,
They are unworthy of my father's
daughter;
My mother dream'd not in my natal hour,
That I should fall into a monster's power.

CLVI

'Perhaps 'tis of Antonia you are jealous,
You saw that she was sleeping by my
side,
When you broke in upon us with your
fellows;
Look where you please—we've nothing,
sir, to hide;
Only another time, I trust, you'll tell us,
Or for the sake of decency abide
A moment at the door, that we may be
Drest to receive so much good company.

CLVII

'And now, sir, I have done, and say no
more;
The little I have said may serve to show
The guileless heart in silence may grieve
o'er
The wrongs to whose exposure it is
slow:—
I leave you to your conscience as before,
'Twill one day ask you, why you used me
so?
God grant you feel not then the bitterest
grief!
Antonia! where's my pocket-handker-
chief?'

CLVIII

She ceased, and turn'd upon her pillow;
pale
She lay, her dark eyes flashing through
their tears,
Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil,
Waved and o'er shading her wan cheek,
appears
Her streaming hair; the black curls strive,
but fail,
To hide the glossy shoulder, which
uprears
Its snow through all;—her soft lips lie
apart,
And louder than her breathing beats her
heart.

CLIX

The Senhor Don Alfonso stood confused;
Antonia bustled round the ransack'd
room,
And, turning up her nose, with looks
abused
Her master, and his myrmidons, of
whom
Not one, except the attorney, was amused;
He, like Achates, faithful to the tomb,
So there were quarrels, cared not for the
cause,
Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

CLX

With prying snub-nose, and small eyes,
he stood,
Following Antonia's motions here and
there,
With much suspicion in his attitude;
For reputations he had little care;
So that a suit or action were made good,
Small pity had he for the young and fair,
And ne'er believed in negatives, till these
Were proved by competent false witnesses.

CLXI

But Don Alfonso stood with downcast
looks,
And, truth to say, he made a foolish
figure;
When, after searching in five hundred
nooks,
And treating a young wife with so much
rigour,
He gain'd no point, except some self-
rebukes,
Added to those his lady with such
vigour
Had pour'd upon him for the last half
hour,
Quick, thick, and heavy—as a thunder-
shower.

CLXII

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
To which the sole reply was tears and sobs,

And indications of hysterics, whose
Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,

Gasps, and whatever else the owners
choose:

Alfonso saw his wife, and thought of
Job's;

He saw too, in perspective, her relations,
And then he tried to muster all his patience.

CLXIII

Hestood in act to speak, or rather stammer,
But sage Antonia cut him short before
The anvil of his speech received the
hammer,

With 'Pray, sir, leave the room, and say
no more,

Or madam dies.'—Alfonso mutter'd,
'D—n her,'

But nothing else, the time of words was
o'er;

He cast a rueful look or two, and did,
He knew not wherefore, that which he was
bid.

CLXIV

With him retired his '*posse comitatus*,'
The attorney last, who linger'd near the
door

Reluctantly, still tarrying there as late as
Antonia let him—not a little sore

At this most strange and unexplain'd
'hiatus'

In Don Alfonso's facts, which just now
wore

An awkward look; as he revolved the case,
The door was fasten'd in his legal face.

CLXV

No sooner was it bolted, than—Oh shame!
Oh sin! Oh sorrow! and Oh woman-
kind!

How can you do such things and keep your
fame,

Unless this world, and t'other too, be
blind?

Nothing so dear as an unfilch'd good name!
But to proceed—for there is more
behind:

With much heartfelt reluctance be it said,
Young Juan slipp'd, half-smother'd, from
the bed.

CLXVI

He had been hid—I don't pretend to say
How, nor can I indeed describe the
where—

Young, slender, and pack'd easily, he lay,
No doubt, in little compass, round or
square;

But pity him I neither must nor may
His suffocation by that pretty pair;
'Twere better, sure, to die so, than be shut
With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey
butt.

CLXVII

And, secondly, I pity not, because
He had no business to commit a sin,
Forbid by heavenly, fined by human
laws;

At least 'twas rather early to begin;
But at sixteen the conscience rarely gnaws
So much as when we call our old debts in
At sixty years, and draw the accompts of
evil,

And find a deuced balance with the devil.

CLXVIII

Of his position I can give no notion:
'Tis written in the Hebrew Chronicle,
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
Prescribed, by way of blister, a young
belle,

When old King David's blood grew dull
in motion,

And that the medicine answer'd very
well;

Perhaps 'twas in a different way applied,
For David lived, but Juan nearly died.

CLXIX

What's to be done? Alfonso will be back
The moment he has sent his fools away.

Antonia's skill was put upon the rack,
But no device could be brought into
play—

And how to parry the renew'd attack?
Besides, it wanted but few hours of day:

Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak,
But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's
cheek.

CLXX

He turn'd his lip to hers, and with his hand
Call'd back the tangles of her wandering
hair;

Even then their love they could not all
command,

And half forgot their danger and
despair:

Antonia's patience now was at a stand—
'Come, come, 'tis no time now for fool-
ing there,'

She whisper'd, in great wrath—'I must
deposit

This pretty gentleman within the closet:

CLXXI

'Pray, keep your nonsense for some
luckier night—

Who can have put my master in this
mood?

What will become on't—I'm in such a
fright,

The devil's in the urchin, and no good—

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

Is this a time for giggling? this a plight?
Why, don't you know that it may end
in blood?
You'll lose your life, and I shall lose my
place,
My mistress all, for that half-girlish face.

CLXXII

'Had it but been for a stout cavalier
Of twenty-five or thirty—(come, make
haste)
But for a child, what piece of work is here!
I really, madam, wonder at your taste—
(Come, sir, get in)—my master must be
near:
There, for the present, at the least, he's
fast,
And if we can but till the morning keep
Our counsel—(Juan, mind, you must not
sleep).'

CLXXIII

Now, Don Alfonso entering, but alone,
Closed the oration of the trusty maid:
She loiter'd, and he told her to be gone,
An order somewhat sullenly obey'd;
However, present remedy was none,
And no great good seem'd answer'd if
she staid;
Regarding both with slow and sidelong
view,
She snuff'd the candle, curtsied, and with-
drew.

CLXXIV

Alfonso paused a minute—then begun
Some strange excuses for his late pro-
ceeding:
He would not justify what he had done,
To say the best, it was extreme ill-
breeding;
But there were ample reasons for it, none
Of which he specified in this his plead-
ing:
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn'd call
'*rigmarole*.'

CLXXV

Julia said nought; though all the while
there rose
A ready answer, which at once enables
A matron, who her husband's foible
knows,
By a few timely words to turn the tables,
Which, if it does not silence, still must
pose,—
Even if it should comprise a pack of
fables;
'Tis to retort with firmness, and when he
Suspects with *one*, do you reproach with
three.

CLXXVI

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds,—
Alfonso's loves with Inez were well
known;
But whether 'twas that one's own guilt
confounds—
But that can't be, as has been often
shown,
A lady with apologies abounds;—
It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was
dear.

CLXXVII

There might be one more motive, which
makes two,
Alfonso ne'er to Juan had alluded,—
Mentioned his jealousy, but never who
Had been the happy lover, he con-
cluded,
Conceal'd amongst his premises; 'tis true,
His mind the more o'er this its mystery
brooded
To speak of Inez now were, one may say,
Like throwing Juan in Alfonso's way.

CLXXVIII

A hint, in tender cases, is enough;
Silence is best: besides there is a *tact*—
(That modern phrase appears to me sad
stuff,
But it will serve to keep my verse com-
pact)—
Which keeps, when push'd by questions
rather rough,
A lady always distant from the fact:
The charming creatures lie with such a
grace,
There's nothing so becoming to the face.

CLXXIX

They blush, and we believe them, at least I
Have always done so; 'tis of no great
use,
In any case, attempting a reply,
For then their eloquence grows quite
profuse;
And when at length they're out of breath,
they sigh,
And cast their languid eyes down, and
let loose
A tear or two, and then we make it up;
And then—and then—and then—sit
down and sup.

CLXXX

Alfonso closed his speech, and begg'd her
pardon,
Which Julia half withheld, and then
half granted,
And laid conditions, he thought very hard,
on,
Denying several little things he wanted:

CANTO I]

He stood like Adam lingering near his garden,
 With useless penitence perplex'd and haunted,
 Beseeching she no further would refuse,
 When, lo! he stumbled o'er a pair of shoes.

CLXXXI

A pair of shoes!—what then? not much,
 if they
 Are such as fit with ladies' feet, but these
 (No one can tell how much I grieve to say)
 Were masculine; to see them, and to seize,
 Was but a moment's act.—Ah! well-a-day!
 My teeth begin to chatter, my veins freeze—
 Alfonso first examined well their fashion,
 And then flew out into another passion.

CLXXXII

He left the room for his relinquish'd sword,
 And Julia instant to the closet flew.
 'Fly, Juan, fly! for heaven's sake—not a word—
 The door is open—you may yet slip through
 The passage you so often have explored—
 Here is the garden-key—Fly—fly—Adieu!
 Haste—haste! I hear Alfonso's hurrying feet—
 Day has not broke—there's no one in the street.'

CLXXXIII

None can say that this was not good advice,
 The only mischief was, it came too late;
 Of all experience 'tis the usual price,
 A sort of income-tax laid on by fate:
 Juan had reach'd the room-door in a trice,
 And might have done so by the garden-gate,
 But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
 Who threaten'd death—so Juan knock'd him down.

CLXXXIV

Dire was the scuffle, and out went the light;
 Antonia cried out 'Rape!' and Julia 'Fire!'
 But not a servant stirr'd to aid the fight.
 Alfonso, pommell'd to his heart's desire,
 Swore lustily he'd be revenged this night;
 And Juan, too, blasphemed an octave higher;
 His blood was up: though young, he was a Tartar,
 And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.

DON JUAN

CLXXXV

Alfonso's sword had dropp'd ere he could draw it,
 And they continued battling hand to hand,
 For Juan very luckily ne'er saw it;
 His temper not being under great command,
 If at that moment he had chanced to claw it,
 Alfonso's days had not been in the land
 Much longer.—Think of husbands',
 lovers' lives!
 And how ye may be doubly widows—wives!

CLXXXVI

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
 And Juan throttled him to get away,
 And blood ('twas from the nose) began to flow;
 At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
 Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
 And then his only garment quite gave way;
 He fled, like Joseph, leaving it; but there,
 I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

CLXXXVII

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
 An awkward spectacle their eyes before;
 Antonia in hysterics, Julia swoon'd,
 Alfonso leaning, breathless, by the door;
 Some half-torn drapery scatter'd on the ground,
 Some blood, and several footsteps, but no more:
 Juan the gate gain'd, turn'd the key about,
 And liking not the inside, lock'd the out.

CLXXXVIII

Here ends this canto.—Need I sing, or say,
 How Juan, naked, favour'd by the night,
 Who favours what she should not, found his way,
 And reach'd his home in an unseemly plight?
 The pleasant scandal which arose next day,
 The nine days' wonder which was brought to light,
 And how Alfonso sued for a divorce,
 Were in the English newspapers, of course.

CLXXXIX

If you would like to see the whole proceedings,
 The depositions and the cause at full,
 The names of all the witnesses, the pleadings
 Of counsel to nonsuit, or to annul,

DON JUAN

[CANTO I

There's more than one edition, and the readings
Are various, but they none of them are dull;

The best is that in short-hand ta'en by Gurney,
WhotoMadridonpurposemadeajourney.

CXC

But Donna Inez, to divert the train
Of one of the most circulating scandals
That had for centuries been known in Spain,

At least since the retirement of the Vandals,
First vow'd (and never had she vow'd in vain)

To Virgin Mary several pounds of candles;

And then, by the advice of some old ladies,
She sent her son to be shipp'd off from Cadiz.

CXCI

She had resolved that he should travel through

All European climes, by land or sea,
To mend his former morals, and get new,
Especially in France and Italy
(At least this is the thing most people do).

Julia was sent into a convent: she
Grieved, but, perhaps, her feelings may be better

Shown in the following copy of her Letter:—

CXCII

'They tell me 'tis decided you depart:
'Tis wise—'tis well, but not the less a pain;

I have no further claim on your young heart,

Mine is the victim, and would be again:
To love too much has been the only art

I used;—I write in haste, and if a stain
Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears;
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

CXCIII

'I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,

And yet cannot regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that dream;
Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I deem;

I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest—
I've nothing to reproach or to request.

CXCIV

'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range

The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;

Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange

Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;

Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

CXCV

'You will proceed in pleasure, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core:

These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before,—
And so farewell—forgive me, love me—
No,

That word is idle now—but let it go.

CXCVI

'My breast has been all weakness, is so yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit's set,
As roll the waves before the settled wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget—

To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,

As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd soul.

CXCVII

'I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete:

I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,

And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life to love and pray for you!'

CXCVIII

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper

With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new;

Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,

It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sun-flower; 'Elle vous suit partout,'

The motto, cut upon a white cornelian;
The wax was superfine, its hue vermilion.

CXCIX

This was Don Juan's earliest scrape; but whether

I shall proceed with his adventures is
Dependent on the public altogether;
We'll see, however, what they say to this,

Their favour in an author's cap's a feather,
And no great mischief's done by their
caprice;
And if their approbation we experience,
Perhaps they'll have some more about a
year hence.

CC

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book
containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings
reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

CCII

All these things will be specified in time,
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
Which makes so many poets, and some
fools:
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of
rhyme,
Good workmen never quarrel with their
tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

CCIII

There's only one slight difference between
Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween
(Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 'tis quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story's actually true.

CCIII

If any person doubt it, I appeal
To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and
feel,
To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
But that which more completely faith
exacts
Is, that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

CCIV

If ever I should condescend to prose,
I'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one
knows,
And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I'll call the work 'Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his own Aristotle.'

CCV

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Cole-
ridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint
and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is some-
what drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers,
nor
Commit—flirtation with the muse of Moore.

CCVI

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;
Thou shalt not bear false witness like 'the
Blues'—
(There's one, at least, is very fond of
this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what I
choose;
This is true criticism, and you may kiss—
Exactly as you please, or not,—the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G—d!

CCVII

If any person should presume to assert
This story is not moral, first, I pray,
That they will not cry out before they're
hurt,
Then that they'll read it o'er again, and
say
(But, doubtless, nobody will be so pert),
That this is not a moral tale, though gay;
Besides, in Canto Twelfth, I mean to show
The very place where wicked people go.

CCVIII

If, after all, there should be some so blind
To their own good this warning to de-
spise,
Let by some tortuosity of mind,
Not to believe my verse and their own
eyes,
And cry that they 'the moral cannot find,'
I tell him, if a clergyman, he lies;
Should captains the remark, or critics, make,
They also lie too—under a mistake.

CCIX

The public approbation I expect,
And beg they'll take my word about the
moral,
Which I with their amusement will connect
(So children cutting teeth receive a coral);
Meantime they'll doubtless please to recol-
lect
My epical pretensions to the laurel:
For fear some prudish readers should grow
skittish,
I've bribed my Grandmother's Review—
the British.

CCX

I sent it in a letter to the Editor,
 Who thank'd me duly by return of post—
 I'm for a handsome article his creditor;
 Yet, if my gentle Muse he please to roast,
 And break a promise after having made it
 her,
 Denying the receipt of what it cost,
 And smear his page with gall instead of
 honey,
 All I can say is—that he had the money.

CCXI

I think that with this holy new alliance
 I may ensure the public, and defy
 All other magazines of art or science,
 Daily, or monthly, or three monthly; I
 Have not essay'd to multiply their clients,
 Because they tell me 'twere in vain to try,
 And that the Edinburgh Review and Quar-
 terly
 Treat a dissenting author very martyrly.

CCXII

'*Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventa
 Consule Planco,*' Horace said, and so
 Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
 Hint that some six or seven good years
 ago
 (Long ere I dreamt of dating from the
 Brenta)
 I was most ready to return a blow,
 And would not brook at all this sort of
 thing
 In my hot youth—when George the Third
 was King.

CCXIII

But now at thirty years my hair is gray—
 (I wonder what it will be like at forty?
 I thought of a peruke the other day—)
 My heart is not much greener; and, in
 short, I
 Have squander'd my whole summer while
 'twas May,
 And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
 Have spent my life, both interest and
 principal,
 And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul
 invincible.

CCXIV

No more—no more—Oh! never more on
 me
 The freshness of the heart can fall like
 dew,
 Which out of all the lovely things we see
 Extracts emotions beautiful and new;
 Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the
 bee.
 Think'st thou the honey with those ob-
 jects grew?
 Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
 To double even the sweetness of a flower.

CCXV

No more—no more—Oh! never more, my
 heart,
 Canst thou be my sole world, my uni-
 verse!
 Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
 Thou canst not be my blessing or my
 curse:
 The illusion's gone for ever, and thou art
 Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,
 And in thy stead I've got a deal of judg-
 ment,
 Though heaven knows how it ever found
 a lodgment.

CCXVI

My days of love are over; me no more
 The charms of maid, wife, and still less
 of widow,
 Can make the fool of which they made
 before,—
 In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
 The credulous hope of mutual minds is
 o'er,
 The copious use of claret is forbid too,
 So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
 I think I must take up with avarice.

CCXVII

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
 Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of
 Pleasure;
 And the two last have left me many a token
 O'er which reflection may be made at
 leisure;
 Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've
 spoken,
 'Time is, Time was, Time's past':—a
 chymic treasure
 Is glittering youth, which I have spent be-
 times—
 My heart in passion, and my head on
 rhymes.

CCXVIII

What is the end of fame? 'tis but to fill
 A certain portion of uncertain paper:
 Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
 Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in
 vapour;
 For this men write, speak, preach, and
 heroes kill,
 And bards burn what they call their
 'midnight taper,'
 To have, when the original is dust,
 A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

CCXIX

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's
 King
 Cheops erected the first pyramid
 And largest, thinking it was just the thing
 To keep his memory whole, and mummy
 hid:

But somebody or other rummaging,
 Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:
 Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
 Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

CCXX

But I, being fond of true philosophy,
 Say very often to myself, 'Alas!
 All things that have been born were born
 to die,
 And flesh (which Death mows down to
 hay) is grass;
 You've pass'd your youth not so unpleas-
 antly,
 And if you had it o'er again—'twould
 pass—
 So thank your stars that matters are no
 worse,
 And read your Bible, sir, and mind your
 purse.'

CCXXI

But for the present, gentle reader! and
 Still gentler purchaser! the bard—that's
 I—
 Must, with permission, shake you by the
 hand,
 And so your humble servant, and good-
 bye!
 We meet again, if we should understand
 Each other; and if not, I shall not try
 Your patience further than by this short
 sample—
 'Twere well if others follow'd my example.

CCXXII

'Go, little book, from this my solitude!
 I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!
 And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
 The world will find thee after many days.'
 When Southey's read, and Wordsworth
 understood,
 I can't help putting in my claim to praise—
 The four first rhymes are Southey's, every
 line:
 For God's sake, reader! take them not for
 mine!

CANTO THE SECOND*

I

OH ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of
 nations,
 Holland, France, England, Germany, or
 Spain,
 I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
 It mends their morals, never mind the
 pain:
 The best of mothers and of educations
 In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
 Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
 Became divested of his native modesty.

* [Begun at Venice, December 13, 1818,—
 finished January 20, 1819.—B.]

II

Had he but been placed at a public school,
 In the third form, or even in the fourth,
 His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
 At least, had he been nurtured in the
 north;
 Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
 But then exceptions always prove its
 worth—
 A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
 Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

III

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
 If all things be consider'd; first, there
 was
 His lady-mother, mathematical,
 A — never mind;—his tutor, an old
 ass;
 A pretty woman—(that's quite natural,
 Or else the thing had hardly come to
 pass)
 A husband rather old, not much in unity
 With his young wife—a time, and oppor-
 tunity.

IV

Well—well; the world must turn upon its
 axis,
 And all mankind turn with it, heads or
 tails,
 And live and die, make love and pay our
 taxes,
 And as the veering wind shifts, shift our
 sails;
 The king commands us, and the doctor
 quacks us,
 The priest instructs, and so our life ex-
 hales,
 A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
 Fighting, devotion, dust,—perhaps a name.

I said, that Juan had been sent to Cadiz—
 A pretty town, I recollect it well—
 'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is,
 (Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel,)
 And such sweet girls—I mean, such grace-
 ful ladies,
 Their very walk would make your bosom
 swell;
 I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
 Nor liken it—I never saw the like:

VI

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
 New broke, a caméléopard, a gazelle,
 No—none of these will do;—and then their
 garb,
 Their veil and petticoat—Alas! to dwell

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto—then their feet and ankles,—
well,
Thank Heaven I've got no metaphor quite
ready,
(And so, my sober Muse—come, let's be
steady—

VII

Chaste Muse!—well, if you must, you
must)—the veil
Thrown back a moment with the glanc-
ing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you
pale,
Flashes into the heart:—All sunny land
Of love! when I forget you, may I fail
To—say my prayers—but never was
there plann'd
A dress through which the eyes give such
a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
To stay there had not answer'd her intent,
But why?—we leave the reader in the
dark—
'Twas for a voyage the young man was
meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a dove of promise forth.

IX

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money: for foursprings
Hewas to travel; and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve—perhaps
believed:
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice—and two or three of credit.

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather
play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the
fool;
Infants of three years old were taught that
day,
Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
The great success of Juan's education
Spurr'd her to teach another generation.

XI

Juan embark'd—the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing
rough;

A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well
enough;
And, standing upon deck, the dashing
spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-
tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first—perhaps his last—farewell of
Spain.

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new:
I recollect Great Britain's coast looks
white,
But almost every other country's blue,
When gazing on them, mystified by dis-
tance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck:
The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and
sailors swore,
And the ship creak'd, the town became a
speck,
From which away so fair and fast they
bore.
The best of remedies is a beef-steak
Against sea-sickness: try it, sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer—so may you.

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the
stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far:
First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to
war;
There is a sort of unexpressed concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart
ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the
steeple.

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in
life;
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart en-
dears—
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.

XVI

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
 By Babel's waters, still remembering
 Sion:
 I'd weep,—but mine is not a weeping
 Muse,
 And such light griefs are not a thing to
 die on;
 Young men should travel, if but to amuse
 Themselves; and the next time their ser-
 vants tie on
 Behind their carriages their new portman-
 teau,
 Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and
 thought,
 While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt
 sea,
 'Sweets to the sweet;' (I like so much to
 quote;
 You must excuse this extract,—'tis where
 she,
 The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia
 brought
 Flowers to the grave;) and, sobbing
 often, he
 Reflected on his present situation,
 And seriously resolved on reformation.

'Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!' he
 cried,
 'Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
 But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
 Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
 Farewell, where Guadalquivir's waters
 glide!
 Farewell, my mother! and, since all is
 o'er,
 Farewell, too, dearest Julia!—(here he
 drew
 Her letter out again, and read it through.)

And oh! if e'er I should forget, I swear—
 But that's impossible, and cannot be—
 Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
 Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
 Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
 Or think of anything, excepting thee;
 A mind diseased no remedy can physic—
 (Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew
 sea-sick.)

XX

'Sooner shall heaven kiss earth—(here he
 fell sicker)
 Oh, Julia! what is every other woe?—
 (For God's sake let me have a glass of
 liquor;
 Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)

Julia, my love—(you rascal, Pedro, quick-
 er)—
 Oh, Julia!—(this curst vessel pitches
 so)—
 Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!'
 (Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)

XXI

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
 Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
 Beyond the best apothecary's art,
 The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
 Or death of those we dote on, when a part
 Of us dies with them as each fond hope
 ends:
 No doubt he would have been much more
 pathetic,
 But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

Love's a capricious power: I've known it
 hold
 Out through a fever caused by its own
 heat,

against all noble maladies he's bold
 But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
 Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
 Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

XXIII

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
 About the lower region of the bowels;
 Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
 Shrinks from the application of hot
 towels,
 And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
 Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect,
 how else
 Could Juan's passion, while the billows
 roar,
 Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

The ship, call'd the most holy 'Trinidad,'
 Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
 For there the Spanish family Moncada
 Were settled long ere Juan's sire was
 born:
 They were relations, and for them he had a
 Letter of introduction, which the morn-
 Of his departure had been sent him by
 His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

XXV

His suite consisted of three servants and
 A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
 Who several languages did understand,
 But now lay sick and speechless on his
 pillow,

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

And, rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,

His headache being increased by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

XXVI

'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind:
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

XXVII

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 'twas time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

XXVIII

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not;
But they could not come at the leak as yet;
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets,
bales of muslin,

XXXIX

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they all had been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

XXX

As day advanced the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand- and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust—which all descriptive power transcends—
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends.

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks;
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

XXXII

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen: first the mizen went,
The main-mast follow'd; but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.
Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all til' every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

XXXIII

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

XXXIV

There's nought, no doubt, so much the
 spirit calms
 As rum and true religion: thus it was,
 Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some
 sung psalms,
 The high wind made the treble, and as
 bass
 The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright
 cured the qualms
 Of all the luckless landmen's sea-sick
 maws:
 Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devo-
 tion,
 Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

XXXV

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but
 for
 Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his
 years,
 Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
 It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
 As if Death were more dreadful by his door
 Of fire than water, spite of oaths and
 tears,
 Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
 Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

XXXVI

'Give us more grog,' they cried, 'for it
 will be
 All one an hour hence.' Juan answer'd,
 'No!
 'Tis true that death awaits both you and
 me,
 But let us die like men, not sink below
 Like brutes':—and thus his dangerous post
 kept he,
 And none liked to anticipate the blow;
 And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
 Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

XXXVII

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
 And made a loud and pious lamenta-
 tion;
 Repented all his sins, and made a last
 Irrevocable vow of reformation;
 Nothing should tempt him more (this peril
 past)
 To quit his academic occupation,
 In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
 To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

XXXVIII

But now there came a flash of hope once
 more;
 Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the
 masts were gone;
 The leak increased; shoals round her, but
 no shore,
 The vessel swam, yet still she held her
 'own.

They tried the pumps again, and though
 before
 Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless
 grown,
 A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to
 bale—
 The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd
 a sail.

XXXIX

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd,
 And for a moment it had some effect;
 But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
 Nor rag of canvas, what could they ex-
 pect?
 But still 'tis best to struggle to the last,
 'Tis never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
 And though 'tis true that man can only die
 once,
 'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

XL

There winds and waves had hurl'd them,
 and from thence,
 Without their will, they carried them
 away;
 For they were forced with steering to dis-
 pense,
 And never had as yet a quiet day
 On which they might repose, or even com-
 mence
 A jurymast or rudder, or could say
 The ship would swim an hour, which, by
 good luck,
 Still swam—though not exactly like a duck.

XLI

The wind, in fact, perhaps, was rather less,
 But the ship labour'd so, they scarce
 could hope
 To weather out much longer; the distress
 Was also great with which they had to
 cope
 For want of water, and their solid mess
 Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
 Was used—nor sail nor shore appear'd in
 sight,
 Nought but the heavy sea, and coming
 night.

XLII

Again the weather threaten'd,—again blew
 A gale, and in the fore and after hold
 Water appear'd; yet, though the people
 knew
 All this, the most were patient, and some
 bold,
 Until the chains and leathers were worn
 through
 Of all our pumps:—a wreck complete
 she roll'd,
 At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
 Like human beings during civil war.

XLIII

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain,
he

Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a
stormy sea,

And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and chil-
dren,

Two things for dying people quite bewil-
dering.

XLIV

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction
gone,

Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints—but there
were none

To pay them with; and some look'd o'er
the bow;

Some hoisted out the boats; and there
was one

That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd—in his con-
fusion.

XLV

Some lash'd them in their hammocks;
some put on

Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed the day on which they saw
the sun,

And gnash'd their teeth, and howling,
tore their hair;

And others went on as they had begun,

Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

XLVI

The worst of all was, that in their condi-
tion,

Having been several days in great dis-
tress,

'Twas difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering
less:

Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the
weather's stress:

Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the
cutter.

XLVII

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured
by the wet;

Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine: and they contrived to
get

A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,
But scarce enough to serve them for a
luncheon—

Then there was rum, eight gallons in a
puncheon.

XLVIII

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's
rail;

And two boats could not hold, far less be
stored,

To save one half the people then on board.

XLIX

'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went
down

Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose
the frown

Of one whose hate is mask'd but to
assail.

Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was
shown,

And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days
had Fear

Been their familiar, and now Death was
here.

L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,

A sort of thing at which one would have
laugh'd,

If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have
quaff'd,

And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical, and half hysterical:—
Their preservation would have been a
miracle.

LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hen-
coops, spars,

And all things, for a chance, had been
cast loose

That still could keep afloat the struggling
tars,

For yet they strove, although of no great
use:

There was no light in heaven but a few
stars,

The boats put off o'ercrowded with their
crews;

She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk,
in short.

LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild fare-
 well—
 Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still
 the brave—
 Then some leap'd overboard with dread-
 ful yell,
 As eager to anticipate their grave;
 And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
 And down she suck'd with her the whirl-
 ing wave,
 Like one who grapples with his enemy,
 And strives to strangle him before he die.

LIII

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
 Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
 Of echoing thunder; and then all was
 hush'd,
 Save the wild wind and the remorseless
 dash
 Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
 Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
 A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
 Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
 And in them crowded several of the
 crew;
 And yet their present hope was hardly
 more
 Than what it had been, for so strong it
 blew
 There was slight chance of reaching any
 shore;
 And then they were too many, though
 so few—
 Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
 Were counted in them when they got afloat.

LV

All the rest perish'd; near two hundred
 souls
 Had left their bodies; and what's worse,
 alas!
 When over Catholics the ocean rolls,
 They must wait several weeks before a
 mass
 Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
 Because, till people know what's come
 to pass,
 They won't lay out their money on the
 dead—
 It costs three francs for every mass that's
 said.

LVI

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
 Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place;
 It seem'd as if they had exchanged their
 care,
 For Juan wore the magisterial face

DON JUAN

Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's
 pair
 Of eyes were crying for their owner's
 case:
 Battista, though (a name call'd shortly
 Tita),
 Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

LVII

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
 But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
 Left him so drunk, he jump'd into the
 wave,
 As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
 And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
 They could not rescue him although so
 close,
 Because the sea ran higher every minute,
 And for the boat—the crew kept crowding
 in it.

LVIII

A small old spaniel—which had been Don
 José's,
 His father's, whom he loved, as ye may
 think,
 For on such things the memory reposes
 With tenderness—stood howling on the
 brink,
 Knowing, (dogs have such intellectual
 noses!)
 No doubt, the vessel was about to sink;
 And Juan caught him up, and ere he
 stepp'd
 Off threw him in, then after him he leap'd.

LIX

He also stuff'd his money where he could
 About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
 Who let him do, in fact, what'er he would,
 Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
 As every rising wave his dread renew'd;
 But Juan, trusting they might still get
 through,
 And deeming there were remedies for any
 ill,
 Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.

LX

'Twas a rough night, and blew so stiffly
 yet,
 That the sail was becalm'd between the
 seas,
 Though on the wave's high top too much
 to set,
 They dared not take it in for all the
 breeze:
 Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept
 them wet,
 And made them bale without a moment's
 ease,
 So that themselves as well as hopes were
 damp'd,
 And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.

LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat
still

Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering
ill

Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast:
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perish'd with
the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be
done:

A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who be-
gun

To faint, and damaged bread wet through
the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but
rags.

LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or
exertion;

They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with
the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their
place,

At watch and watch; thus, shivering like
the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

LXIV

'Tis very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,
When patients, neither plagued with friends
nor wife,
Survive through very desperate condi-
tions,

Because they still can hope, nor shines the
knife

Nor shears of Atropos before their
visions:

Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men's miseries of alarming
brevity.

LXV

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others,—God
knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors,—yet so true
it is,
That some, I really think, *do* never die;

Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And *that's* their mode of furnishing
supply:

In my young days they lent me cash that
way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

LXVI

'Tis thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of life, and bear
More than can be believed, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear
and tear;

And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and
there;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the
Argo.

LXVII

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal
a day;

He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suc-
tion,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have
prey;

Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way,
Your labouring people think beyond all
question
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

LXVIII

And thus it was with this our hapless crew;
For on the third day there came on a
calm,

And though at first their strength it might
renew,

And lying on their weariness like balm,
Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the
blue

Of ocean, when they woke they felt a
qualm,

And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.

LXIX

The consequence was easily foreseen—
They ate up all they had, and drank their
wine,

In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to
dine?

They hoped the wind would rise, these
foolish men!

And carry them to shore; these hopes
were fine,

But as they had but one oar, and that
brittle,

It would have been more wise to save their
victual.

LXX

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child:

The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,

The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild—

With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)

What could they do? and hunger's rage grew wild:

So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd, and portion'd out for present eating.

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because

The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,

With some remorse received (though first denied)

As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.

LXXII

The seventh day, and no wind—the burning sun

Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,

They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not: savagely

They glared upon each other—all was done,
Water, and wine, and food,—and you might see

The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.

LXXIII

At length one whisper'd his companion, who

Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,

And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;

And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,

'Twas but his own, suppress'd till now, he found:

And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,

And who should die to be his fellow's food.

LXXIV

But ere they came to this, they that day shared

Some leathern caps, and what remain'd of shoes;

And then they look'd around them, and despair'd,

And none to be the sacrifice would choose;

At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,

But of materials that must shock the Muse—

Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

LXXV

Then lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd, and handed

In silent horror, and their distribution

Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,

Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;

None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
'Twas Nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,

By which none were permitted to be neuter—

And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.

LXXVI

He but requested to be bled to death:
The surgeon had his instruments, and bled

Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,

You hardly could perceive when he was dead.

He died as born, a Catholic in faith,
Like most in the belief in which they're bred,

And first a little crucifix he kiss'd,
And then held out his jugular and wrist.

LXXVII

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;

But being thirstiest at the moment, he
Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing veins:

Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
And such things as the entrails and the brains

Regaled two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow—

The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

LXXVIII

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
Who were not quite so fond of animal food;

To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could

Feel now his appetite increased much more;
'Twas not to be expected that he should,

Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.

LXXXIX

'Twas better that he did not; for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme;
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad—Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam, and roll, with strange convulsions rack'd,
Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream;
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyæna-laughter, died despairing.

LXXX

Their numbers were much thinn'd by this infliction,
And all the rest were thin enough,
Heaven knows;
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceived their woes;
But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly.

LXXXI

And next they thought upon the master's mate,
As fastest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons: the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late;
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause,
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies.

LXXXII

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain'd,
But was used sparingly,—some were afraid,
And others still their appetites constrain'd,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstain'd,
Chewing a piece of bamboo, and some lead:
At length they caught two boobies, and a noddy,
And then they left off eating the dead body.

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
The moment after he politely ends

His tale: if foes be food in hell, at sea
'Tis surely fair to dine upon our friends,
When shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
Without being much more horrible than Dante.

LXXXIV

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain,
Men really know not what good water's worth;
If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You'd wish yourself where Truth is—in a well.

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer,
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deem'd its moisture was complete,
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

LXXXVI

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd;
Their throats were ovens, their swollen tongues were black
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
To taste of heaven—If this be true, indeed,
Some Christians have a comfortable creed.

LXXXVII

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
And with them their two sons, of whom the one
Was more robust and hardy to the view,
But he died early; and when he was gone,

His nearest messmate told his sire, who
threw

One glance at him, and said, 'Heaven's
will be done!
I can do nothing,' and he saw him thrown
Into the deep without a tear or groan.

LXXXVIII

The other father had a weaklier child,
Of a soft cheek, and aspect delicate;
But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
And patient spirit held aloof his fate;
Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
As if to win a part from off the weight
He saw increasing on his father's heart,
With the deep deadly thought, that they
must part.

LXXXIX

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the
foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
And when the wish'd-for shower at
length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film
half glazed,
Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd
to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops
of rain
Into his dying child's mouth—but in vain.

XC

The boy expired—the father held the clay,
And look'd upon it long, and when at
last
Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen
lay
Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope
were past,
He watch'd it wistfully, until away
'Twas borne by the rude wave wherein
'twas cast;
Then he himself sunk down all dumb and
shivering,
And gave no sign of life, save his limbs
quivering.

XCI

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning
the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering
blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner
free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent,
and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd
men.

XCII

It changed, of course; a heavenly chame-
leon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in
vermilion,
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed
in dun,
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's
pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the
muffle).

XCIII

Our shipwreck'd seamen thought it a
good omen—
It is as well to think so, now and then;
'Twas an old custom of the Greek and
Roman,
And may become of great advantage
when
Folks are discouraged; and most surely
no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves
again
Than these, and so this rainbow look'd
like hope—
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope.

XCIV

About this time a beautiful white bird,
Web-footed, not unlike a dove in size
And plumage (probably it might have
err'd
Upon its course), pass'd oft before their
eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and
heard
The men within the boat, and in this
guise
It came and went, and flutter'd round
them till
Night fell:—this seem'd a better omen
still.

XCV

But in this case I also must remark,
'Twas well this bird of promise did not
perch,
Because the tackle of our shatter'd bark
Was not so safe for roosting as a church;
And had it been the dove from Noah's
ark,
Returning there from her successful
search,
Which in their way that moment chanced
to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch
and all.

XCVI

With twilight it again came on to blow,
 But not with violence; the stars shone
 out,
 The boat made way; yet now they were so
 low,
 They knew not where nor what they
 were about;
 Some fancied they saw land, and some
 said 'No!'
 The frequent fog-banks gave them cause
 to doubt—
 Some swore that they heard breakers,
 others guns,
 And all mistook about the latter once.

XCVII

As morning broke, the light wind died
 away,
 When he who had the watch sung out
 and swore,
 If 'twas not land that rose with the sun's
 ray,
 He wish'd that land he never might see
 more:
 And the rest rubb'd their eyes, and saw
 a bay,
 Or thought they saw, and shaped their
 course for shore;
 For shore it was, and gradually grew
 distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

XCVIII

And then of these some part burst into
 tears,
 And others, looking with a stupid stare,
 Could not yet separate their hopes from
 fears,
 And seem'd as if they had no further
 care;
 While a few pray'd—(the first time for
 some years)—
 And at the bottom of the boat three
 were
 Asleep: they shook them by the hand and
 head,
 And tried to awaken them, but found them
 dead.

XCIX

The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
 They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill
 kind,
 And by good fortune, gliding softly,
 caught her,
 Which yielded a day's life, and to their
 mind
 Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
 Because it left encouragement be-
 hind:
 They thought that in such perils, more
 than chance
 Had sent them this for their deliverance.

C

The land appear'd a high and rocky coast,
 And higher grew the mountains as they
 drew,
 Set by a current, toward it: they were lost
 In various conjectures, for none knew
 To what part of the earth they had been
 tost,
 So changeable had been the winds that
 blew;
 Some thought it was Mount Ætna, some
 the highlands
 Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other
 islands.

CI

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
 Still set them onwards to the welcome
 shore,
 Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and
 pale:
 Their living freight was now reduced to
 four,
 And three dead, whom their strength
 could not avail
 To heave into the deep with those before,
 Though the two sharks still follow'd them,
 and dash'd
 The spray into their faces as they splash'd.

CII

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat,
 had done
 Their work on them by turns, and
 thinn'd them to
 Such things a mother had not known her
 son
 Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt
 crew;
 By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one
 by one
 They perish'd, until wither'd to these
 few,
 But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
 In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.

CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now
 was seen
 Unequal in its aspect here and there,
 They felt the freshness of its growing
 green,
 That waved in forest-tops, and
 smooth'd the air,
 And fell upon their glazed eyes like a
 screen
 From glistening waves, and skies so hot
 and bare—
 Lovely seem'd any object that should
 sweep
 Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

CIV

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of
man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course
they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring
breakers lay:
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding
spray,
But finding no place for their landing
better,
They ran the boat for shore,—and overset
her.

CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was
wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet
river,
Had often turn'd the art to some
account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see
ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the
Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we
prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated, and
stark,
He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove
to play
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was
dark,
The beach which lay before him, high
and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the
thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

CVII

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was
wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no
more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him
as 'twas dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was
lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scram-
bling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half senseless, from
the sea:

CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails
he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he
wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate
grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was
flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps in
vain.

CIX

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he look'd
for those
Who long had been his mates upon the
sea;
But none of them appear'd to share his
woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the
famish'd three,
Who died two days before, and now had
found
An unknown barren beach for burial-
ground.

CX

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the
sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses
pass'd:
He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd
hand
Droop'd dripping on the oar (their jury-
mast),
And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay.

CXI

How long in his damp trance young Juan
lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone
for him,
And time had nothing more of night nor
day
For his congealing blood, and senses
dim;
And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and
limb,
And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back
to life,
For Death, though vanquish'd, still
retired with strife.

CXII

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
 For all was doubt and dizziness; he
 thought
 He still was in the boat, and had but dozed,
 And felt again with his despair o'er-
 wrought,
 And wish'd it death in which he had
 reposed,
 And then once more his feelings back
 were brought,
 And slowly by his swimming eyes was
 A lovely female face of seventeen.

CXIII

'Twas bending close o'er his, and the
 small mouth
 Seem'd almost prying into his for
 breath;
 And chafing him, the soft warm hand of
 youth
 Recall'd his answering spirits back
 from death;
 And, bathing his chill temples, tried to
 soothe
 Each pulse to animation, till beneath
 Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
 To these kind efforts made a low reply.

CXIV

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle
 flung
 Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the
 fair arm
 Raised higher the faint head which o'er it
 hung;
 And her transparent cheek, all pure and
 warm,
 Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she
 wrung
 His dewy curls, long drench'd by every
 storm;
 And watch'd with eagerness each throb
 that drew
 A sigh from his heaved bosom—and hers,
 too.

CXV

And lifting him with care into the cave,
 The gentle girl, and her attendant,—
 one
 Young, yet her elder, and of brow less
 grave,
 And more robust of figure—then begun
 To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
 Light to the rocks that roof'd them,
 which the sun
 Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
 She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and
 fair.

CXVI

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
 That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair,
 Her clustering hair, whose longer locks
 were roll'd
 In braids behind; and though her
 stature were
 Even of the highest for a female mould,
 They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her
 air
 There was a something which bespoke
 command,
 As one who was a lady in the land.

CXVII

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
 Were black as death, their lashes the
 same hue,
 Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow
 lies
 Deepest attraction; for when to the view
 Forth from its raven fringe the full glance
 flies,
 Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow
 flew;
 'Tis as the snake late coil'd, who pours his
 length,
 And hurls at once his venom and his
 strength.

CXVIII

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's
 pure dye
 Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
 Short upper lip—sweet lips! that make us
 sigh
 Ever to have seen such; for she was one
 Fit for the model of a statuary
 (A race of mere impostors, when all's
 done—
 I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
 Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

CXIX

I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
 One should not rail without a decent
 cause:
 There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
 I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
 A frequent model; and if e'er she must
 Yield to stern Time and Nature's
 wrinkling laws,
 They will destroy a face which mortal
 thought
 Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel
 wrought.

CXX

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
 Her dress was very different from the
 Spanish,
 Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;
 For, as you know, the Spanish women
 banish

Bright hues when out of doors, and yet,
 while wave
 Around them (what I hope will never
 vanish)

The basquina and the mantilla, they
 Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

CXXI

But with our damsel this was not the case:
 Her dress was many-colour'd, finely
 spun;

Her locks curl'd negligently round her
 face,
 But through them gold and gems pro-
 fusely shone:

Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
 Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious
 stone

Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was
 shocking,

Her small snow feet had slippers, but no
 stocking.

CXXII

The other female's dress was not unlike,
 But of inferior materials: she

Had not so many ornaments to strike,
 Her hair had silver only, bound to be
 Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
 Was coarser; and her air, though firm,
 less free;

Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
 As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

CXXIII

And these two tended him, and cheer'd
 him both

With food and raiment, and those soft
 attentions,
 Which are—(as I must own)—of female
 growth,

And have ten thousand delicate inven-
 tions:

They made a most superior mess of broth,
 A thing which poesy but seldom men-
 tions,

But the best dish that e'er was cook'd
 since Homer's

Achilles order'd dinner for new comers.

CXXIV

I'll tell you who they were, this female
 pair,

Lest they should seem princesses in
 disguise;

Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
 Of clap-trap, which your recent poets
 prize;

And so, in short, the girls they really were
 They shall appear before your curious
 eyes,

Mistress and maid; the first was only
 daughter

Of an old man, who lived upon the water.

CXXV

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
 And still a sort of fisherman was he;
 But other speculations were, in sooth,
 Added to his connexion with the sea,
 Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:

A little smuggling, and some piracy,
 Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
 Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.

CXXVI

A fisher, therefore, was he,—though of
 men,

Like Peter the Apostle,—and he fish'd
 For wandering merchant vessels, now and
 then,

And sometimes caught as many as he
 wish'd;

The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
 He sought in the slave-market too, and
 dish'd

Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
 By which, no doubt, a good deal may be
 made.

CXXVII

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
 (One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
 A very handsome house from out his guilt,
 And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
 Heaven knows what cash he got, or blood
 he spilt,

A sad old fellow was he, if you please;
 But this I know, it was a spacious building,
 Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

CXXVIII

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidée,
 The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;

Besides, so very beautiful was she,
 Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles:

Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
 She grew to womanhood, and between
 whiles

Rejected several suitors, just to learn
 How to accept a better in his turn.

CXXIX

And walking out upon the beach, below
 The cliff,—towards sunset, on that day
 she found,

Insensible,—not dead, but nearly so,—
 Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half
 drown'd;

But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
 Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound,
 As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
 A stranger' dying, with so white a skin.

CXXX

But taking him into her father's house
 Was not exactly the best way to save,

But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
 Or people in a trance into their grave;

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

Because the good old man had so much
'vous,'
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so
brave,
He would have hospitably cured the
stranger
And sold him instantly when out of
danger.

CCCCI

And therefore, with her maid, she thought
it best
(A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
And when, at last, he open'd his black
eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest;
And their compassion grew to such a
size,
It open'd half the turnpike gates to
heaven—
(St. Paul says, 'tis the toll which must be
given).

CCCCII

They made a fire,—but such a fire as they
Upon the moment could contrive with
such
Materials as were cast up round the
bay,—
Some broken planks, and oars, that to
the touch
Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay,
A mast was almost crumbled to a
crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in
such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnish'd
twenty.

CCCCIII

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
For Haidée stripp'd her sables off to
make
His couch; and, that he might be more at
ease,
And warm, in case by chance he should
awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
She and her maid,—and promised by
daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and
fish.

CCCCIV

And thus they left him to his lone repose:
Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only
knows),
Just for the present; and in his lull'd
head
Not even a vision of his former woes
Throbb'd in accursed dreams, which
sometimes spread

Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with
tears.

CCCCV

Young Juan slept all dreamless:—but the
maid,
Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the
den
Look'd back upon him, and a moment
stayed,
And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she
said
(The heart will slip, even as the tongue
and pen),
He had pronounced her name—but she
forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

CCCCVI

And pensive to her father's house she
went,
Enjoining silence strict to Zoe, who
Better than her knew what, in fact, she
meant,
She being wiser by a year or two:
A year or two's an age when rightly spent,
And Zoe spent hers, as most women do,
In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
Which is acquired in Nature's good old
college.

CCCCVII

The morn broke, and found Juan slumber-
ing still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd
upon
His rest: the rushing of the neighbouring
rill,
And the young beams of the excluded
sun,
Troubled him not, and he might sleep his
fill;
And need he had of slumber yet, for
none
Had suffer'd more—his hardships were
comparative
To those related in my grand-dad's
'Narrative.'

CCCCVIII

Not so Haidée: she sadly toss'd and
tumbled,
And started from her sleep, and,
turning o'er,
Dream'd of a thousand wrecks, o'er which
she stumbled,
And handsome corpses strew'd upon
the shore;
And woke her maid so early that she
grumbled,
And call'd her father's old slaves up,
who swore

In several oaths—Armenian, Turk, and Greek—
They knew not what to think of such a freak.

CXXXIX

But up she got, and up she made them get,
With some pretence about the sun, that makes
Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
And 'tis, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phœbus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband,—or some other brute.

CXL

I say, the sun is a most glorious sight:
I've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
I have sat up on purpose all the night,
Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;
And so all ye, who would be in the right
In health and purse, begin your day to date
From daybreak, and when coffin'd at four-score
Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four.

CXLI

And Haidée met the morning face to face;
Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
From heart to cheek is curb'd into a blush,
Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
That overpowers some Alpine river's rush,
Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
Or the Red Sea—but the sea is not red.

CXLI

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew,
While the sun smiled on her with his first flame,
And young Aurora kiss'd her lips with dew,
Taking her for a sister; just the same
Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
Had all the advantage, too, of not being air.

CXLIII

And when into the cavern Haidée stepp'd
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept;
And then she stopp'd, and stood as if in awe
(For sleep is awful), and on tiptoe crept
And wrapt him closer, lest the air, too raw,
Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as death
Bent, with hush'd lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

CXLIV

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
Who die in righteousness, she lean'd;
And there
All tranquilly the shipwreck'd boy was lying,
As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air:
But Zoe the meantime some eggs was frying,
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
Must breakfast, and betimes—lest they should ask it,
She drew out her provision from the basket.

CXLV

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,
And that a shipwreck'd youth would hungry be;
Besides, being less in love, she yawn'd a little,
And felt her veins chill'd by the neighbouring sea;
And so, she cook'd their breakfast to a tittle;
I can't say that she gave them any tea,
But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,
With Scio wine,—and all for love, not money.

CXLVI

And Zoe, when the eggs were ready, and
The coffee made, would fain have waken'd Juan;
But Haidée stopp'd her with her quick small hand,
And without word, a sign her finger drew on
Her lip, which Zoe needs must understand;
And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,
Because her mistress would not let her break
That sleep which seem'd as it would ne'er awake.

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

CXLVII

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek
A purple hectic play'd like dying day
On the snow-tops of distant hills; the
streak
Of suffrance yet upon his forehead lay,
Where the blue veins look'd shadowy,
shrunk, and weak;
And his black curls were dewy with the
spray,
Which weigh'd upon them yet, all damp
and salt,
Mix'd with the stony vapours of the vault.

CXLVIII

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's
breast,
Droop'd as the willow when no winds can
breathe,
Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at
rest,
Fair as the crowning rose of the whole
wreath,
Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
Although his woes had turn'd him rather
yellow.

CXLIX

He woke and gazed, and would have slept
again,
But the fair face which met his eyes
forbade
Those eyes to close, though weariness and
pain
Had further sleep a further pleasure
made;
For woman's face was never form'd in
vain
For Juan, so that even when he pray'd
He turn'd from grisly saints, and martyrs
hairy,
To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary.

CL

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
And look'd upon the lady, in whose
cheek
The pale contended with the purple rose,
As with an effort she began to speak;
Her eyes were eloquent, her words would
pose,
Although she told him, in good modern
Greek,
With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
That he was faint, and must not talk, but
eat.

CLI

Now Juan could not understand a word,
Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
And her voice was the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,

That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why—an overpowering
tone,
Whence melody descends as from a
throne.

CLII

And Juan gazed as one who is awake
By a distant organ, doubting if he be
Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke
By the watchman, or some such reality,
Or by one's early valet's cursed knock;
At least it is a heavy sound to me,
Who like a morning slumber—for the night
Shows stars and women in a better light.

CLIII

And Juan, too, was help'd out from his
dream,
Or sleep, or whatsoe'er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite; the steam
Of Zoe's cookery no doubt was stealing
Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
Of the new fire, which Zoe kept up,
kneeling,
To stir her viands, made him quite awake
And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid,
and mutton,
And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint upon their barbarous spits they
put on:
But this occurs but seldom, between
whiles,
For some of these are rocks with scarce
a hut on;
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the
most rich.

CLV

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
That the old fable of the Minotaur—
From which our modern morals, rightly
shrinking,
Condemn the royal lady's taste who
wore
A cow's shape for a mask—was only
(sinking
The allegory) a mere type, no more,
That Pasiphae promoted breeding cattle,
To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.

CLVI

For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef—I won't say much of
beer,
Because 'tis liquor only, and being far
From this my subject, has no business
here;

We know, too, they are very fond of war,
 A pleasure—like all pleasures—rather
 dear;
 So were the Cretans—from which I infer
 That beef and battles both were owing to
 her.

CLVII

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
 His head upon his elbow, and he saw
 A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
 As all his latter meals had been quite
 raw,
 Three or four things, for which the Lord
 he praised,
 And, feeling still the famish'd vulture
 gnaw,
 He fell upon whate'er was offer'd, like
 A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

CLVIII

He ate, and he was well supplied; and she,
 Who watch'd him like a mother, would
 have fed
 Him past all bounds, because she smiled
 to see
 Such appetite in one she had deem'd
 dead:
 But Zoe, being older than Haidée,
 Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had
 read)
 That famish'd people must be slowly
 nurst,
 And fed by spoonfuls, else they always
 burst.

CLIX

And so she took the liberty to state,
 Rather by deeds than words, because
 the case
 Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose
 fate
 Had made her mistress quit her bed to
 trace
 The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his
 plate,
 Unless he wish'd to die upon the place—
 She snatch'd it, and refused another
 morsel,
 Saying, he had gorged enough to make a
 horse ill.

CLX

Next they—he being naked, save a tatter'd
 Pair of scarce decent trowsers—went to
 work,
 And in the fire his recent rags they
 scatter'd,
 And dress'd him, for the present, like a
 Turk,
 Or Greek—that is, although it not much
 matter'd,
 Omitting turban, slippers, pistols,
 dirk,—

They furnish'd him, entire, except some
 stitches,
 With a clean shirt, and very spacious
 breeches.

CLXI

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at
 speaking,
 But not a word could Juan comprehend,
 Although he listen'd so that the young
 Greek in
 Her earnestness would ne'er have made
 an end;
 And, as he interrupted not, went eking
 Her speech out to her protégé and
 friend,
 Till pausing at the last her breath to take,
 She saw he did not understand Romaic.

CLXII

And then she had recourse to nods, and
 signs,
 And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking
 eye,
 And read (the only book she could) the
 lines
 Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
 The answer eloquent, where the soul
 shines
 And darts in one quick glance a long
 reply;
 And thus in every look she saw express'd
 A world of words, and things at which she
 guess'd.

CLXIII

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
 And words repeated after her, he took
 A lesson in her tongue; but by surmise,
 No doubt, less of her language than her
 look:
 As he who studies fervently the skies
 Turns oftener to the stars than to his
 book,
 Thus Juan learn'd his alpha beta better
 From Haidée's glance than any graven
 letter.

CLXIV

'Tis pleasing to be school'd in a strange
 tongue
 By female lips and eyes—that is, I mean,
 When both the teacher and the taught are
 young,
 As was the case, at least, where I have
 been;
 They smile so when one's right, and when
 one's wrong
 They smile still more, and then there
 intervene
 Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste
 kiss;—
 I learn'd the little that I know by this:

CLXV

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and
Greek,
Italian not at all, having no teachers;
Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
Learning that language chiefly from its
preachers,
Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every
week
I study, also Blair, the highest reachers
Of eloquence in piety and prose—
I hate your poets, so read none of those.

CLXVI

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
A wanderer from the British world of
fashion,
Where I, like other 'dogs, have had my
day,
Like other men, too, may have had my
passion—
But that, like other things, has pass'd away,
And all her fools whom I *could* lay the
lash on:
Foes, friends, men, women, now are
nought to me
But dreams of what has been, no more to
be.

CLXVII

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
To hear new words, and to repeat them;
but
Some feelings, universal as the sun,
Were such as could not in his breast be
shut
More than within the bosom of a nun:
He was in love,—as you would be, no
doubt,
With a young benefactress,—so was she,
Just in the way we very often see.

CLXVIII

And every day by daybreak—rather early
For Juan, who was somewhat fond of
rest—
She came into the cave, but it was merely
To see her bird reposing in his nest;
And she would softly stir his locks so
curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering

ing all gently o'er his cheek and
mouth,
As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.

CLXIX

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
And every day help'd on his con-
valescence;
'Twas well, because health in the human
frame
Is pleasant, besides being true love's
essence,

For health and idleness to passion's flame
Are oil and gunpowder; and some good
lessons
Are also learnt from Ceres and from
Bacchus,
Without whom Venus will not long attack
us.

CLXX

While Venus fills the heart (without heart
really
Love, though good always, is not quite
so good),
Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli,—
For love must be sustain'd like flesh and
blood,
While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a
jelly:
Eggs, oysters, too, are amatory food;
But who is their purveyor from above
Heaven knows,—it may be Neptune, Pan,
or Jove.

CLXXI

When Juan woke he found some good
things ready,
A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
That ever made a youthful heart less
steady,
Besides her maid's, as pretty for their
size;
But I have spoken of all this already—
And repetition's tiresome and unwise,—
Well—Juan, after bathing in the sea,
Came always back to coffee and Haidée.

CLXXII

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
That bathing pass'd for nothing: Juan
seem'd
To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
Of whom these two years she had
nightly dream'd,
A something to be loved, a creature
meant
To be her happiness, and whom she
deem'd
To render happy: all who joy would win
Must share it,—Happiness was born a
twin.

CLXXIII

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his
touch,
To watch him slumbering, and to see
him wake;
To live with him for ever were too much;
But then the thought of parting made
her quake:
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreck—her first love, and her
last.

CLXXIV

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair
 Haidée
 Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
 Such plentiful precautions, that still he
 Remain'd unknown within his craggy
 nook;
 At last her father's prow put out to sea,
 For certain merchantmen upon the
 look,
 Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
 But three Ragusan vessels bound for Scio.

CLXXV

Then came her freedom, for she had no
 mother,
 So that, her father being at sea, she was
 Free as a married woman, or such other
 Female, as where she likes may freely
 pass,
 Without even the encumbrance of a
 brother,
 The freest she that ever gazed on glass:
 I speak of Christian lands in this com-
 parison,
 Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in
 garrison.

CLXXVI

Now she prolong'd her visits and her talk
 (For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
 So much as to propose to take a walk,—
 For little had he wander'd since the day
 On which, like a young flower snapp'd
 from the stalk,
 Drooping and dewy on the beach he
 lay,—
 And thus they walk'd out in the afternoon,
 And saw the sun set opposite the moon.

CLXXVII

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
 With cliffs above, and a broad sandy
 shore,
 Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an
 host,
 With here and there a creek, whose
 aspect wore
 A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
 And rarely ceased the haughty billow's
 roar,
 Save on the dead long summer days,
 which make
 The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

CLXXVIII

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
 Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your
 champagne,
 When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers
 reach,
 That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's
 rain!

DON JUAN

Few things surpass old wine; and they
 may preach
 Who please,—the more because they
 preach in vain,—
 Let us have wine and women, mirth and
 laughter,
 Sermons and soda-water the day after.

CLXXIX

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
 The best of life is but intoxication:
 Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are
 sunk
 The hopes of all men, and of every
 nation;
 Without their sap, how branchless were the
 trunk
 Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on
 occasion!
 But to return,—Get very drunk; and when
 You wake with headache, you shall see
 what then.

CLXXX

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
 Some hock and soda-water, then you'll
 know
 A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
 For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with
 snow,
 Nor the first sparkle of the desert spring,
 Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
 After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
 Vie with that draught of hock and soda-
 water.

CLXXXI

The coast—I think it was the coast that I
 Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the
 coast—
 Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
 The sands untumbled, the blue waves
 untost,
 And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
 And dolphin's leap, and little billow
 crost
 By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
 Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

CLXXXII

And forth they wander'd, her sire being
 gone,
 As I have said, upon an expedition;
 And mother, brother, guardian, she had
 none,
 Save Zoe, who, although with due pre-
 cision
 She waited on her lady with the sun,
 Thought daily service was her only
 mission,
 Bringing warm water, wreathing her long
 tresses,
 And asking now and then for cast-off
 dresses.

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill,
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

CLXXXIV

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

CLXXXV

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think it must be reckon'd by its length.

CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckon'd;

And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

CLXXXIX

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,
They felt no terrors from the night; they were
All in all to each other; though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird,
And never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

CXCI

She loved, and was beloved—she adored,
And she was worshipp'd; after nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion,—

But by degrees their senses were restored,
 Again to be o'ercome, again to dash
 on;
 And, beating 'gainst his bosom, Haidée's
 heart
 Felt as if never more to beat apart.

CXCII

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
 So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
 Was that in which the heart is always full,
 And, having o'er itself no further
 power,
 Prompts deeds eternity cannot annul,
 But pays off moments in an endless
 shower
 Of hell-fire—all prepared for people
 giving
 Pleasure or pain to one another living.

CXCIII

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
 So loving and so lovely—till then never,
 Excepting our first parents, such a pair
 Had run the risk of being damn'd for
 ever;
 And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
 Had, doubtless, heard about the
 Stygian river,
 And hell and purgatory—but forgot
 Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXCIV

They look upon each other, and their eyes
 Glean in the moonlight; and her white
 arm clasps
 Round Juan's head, and his around her
 lies
 Half buried in the tresses which it
 grasps;
 She sits upon his knee, and drinks his
 sighs,
 He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
 And thus they form a group that's quite
 antique,
 Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

CXCv

And when those deep and burning
 moments pass'd,
 And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
 She slept not, but all tenderly, though
 fast,
 Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's
 charms;
 And now and then her eye to heaven is
 cast,
 And then on the pale cheek her breast
 now warms,
 Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which
 pants
 With all it granted, and with all it grants.

CXCvi

An infant when it gazes on a light,
 A child the moment when it drains the
 breast,
 A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
 An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
 A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
 A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
 Feel rapture; but not such true joy are
 reaping
 As they who watch o'er what they love
 while sleeping.

CXCvii

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
 All that it hath of life with us is living;
 So gentle, stillness, helpless, and unmoved,
 And all unconscious of the joy 'tis
 giving;
 All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and
 proved,
 Hush'd into depths beyond the
 watcher's diving;
 There lies the thing we love with all its
 errors
 And all its charms, like death without its
 terrors.

CXCviii

The lady watch'd her lover—and that hour
 Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's
 solitude,
 O'erflow'd her soul with their united
 power;
 Amidst the barren sand and rocks so
 rude
 She and her wave-worn love had made
 their bower,
 Where nought upon their passion could
 intrude,
 And all the stars that crowded the blue
 space
 Saw nothing happier than her glowing
 face.

CXCix

Alas! the love of women! it is known
 To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
 For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
 And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to
 bring
 To them but mockeries of the past alone,
 And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
 Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as
 real
 Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

CC

They are right; for man, to man so oft
 unjust,
 Is always so to women; one sole bond
 Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
 Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts
 despond

DON JUAN

[CANTO II

Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests
beyond?

A thankless husband, next a faithless
lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's
over.

CCI

Some take a lover, some take drams or
prayers,
Some/mind their household, others dis-
sipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their
cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous
station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Their being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a
novel.

CCII

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not
this:
Haidée was Passion's child, born where
the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even
the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was
one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or
done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought
to fear,
Hope, care, nor love beyond,—her heart
beat *here*.

CCIII

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that
beat!
How much it costs us! yet each rising
throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat
Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has
a tough job
To make us understand each good old
maxim,
So good—I wonder Castlereagh don't tax
'em.

CCIV

And now 'twas done—on the lone shore
were plighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial
torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
Ocean their witness, and the cave their
bed,

By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were
wed:

And they were happy, for to their young
eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

CCV

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the
suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho the sage blue-stocking, in whose
grave
All those may leap who rather would be
neuter—
(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the
wave)—
Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil,
For, after all, we cannot call thee devil.

CCVI

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state
precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest
men:
Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
Have much employ'd the muse of
history's pen:
Their lives and fortunes were extremely
various,
Such worthies Time will never see again;
Yet to these four in three things the same
luck holds,
They all were heroes, conquerors, and
cuckolds.

CCVII

Thou mak'st philosophers; there's
Epicurus
And Aristippus, a material crew!
Who to immoral courses would allure us
By theories quite practicable too;
If only from the devil they would insure
us,
How pleasant were the maxim (not
quite new),
'Eat, drink, and love; what can the rest
avail us?'
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.

CCVIII

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
And should he have forgotten her so
soon?
I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
Perplexing question; but, no doubt,
the moon
Does these things for us, and whenever
newly a
Strong palpitation rises, 'tis her boon,
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human
creatures?

CCIX

I hate inconstancy—I loathe, detest,
 Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal
 made
 Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
 No permanent foundations can be laid;
 Love, constant love, has been my constant
 guest,
 And yet last night, being at a masquer-
 ade,
 I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from
 Milan,
 Which gave me some sensations like a
 villain.

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
 And whisper'd, 'Think of every sacred
 tie!'
 'I will, my dear Philosophy!' I said,
 'But then her teeth, and then, oh,
 Heaven! her eye!
 I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
 Or neither—out of curiosity.'
 'Stop!' cried Philosophy, with air so
 Grecian
 (Though she was masqued then as a fair
 Venetian);

CCXI

'Stop!' so I stopp'd.—But to return: that
 which
 Men call inconstancy is nothing more
 Than admiration due where nature's rich
 Profusion with young beauty covers
 o'er
 Some favour'd object; and as in the niche
 A lovely statue we almost adore,
 This sort of adoration of the real
 Is but a heightening of the *beau idéal*.

CCXII

'Tis the perception of the beautiful,
 A fine extension of the faculties,
 Platonic, universal, wonderful,
 Drawn from the stars, and filter'd
 through the skies,
 Without which life would be extremely
 dull;
 In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
 With one or two small senses added, just
 To hint that flesh is form'd of fiery dust.

CCXIII

Yet 'tis a painful feeling, and unwilling,
 For surely if we always could perceive
 In the same object graces quite as killing
 As when she rose upon us like an Eve,
 'Twould save us many a heart-ache, many
 a shilling
 (For we must get them any how, or
 grieve),
 Whereas, if one sole lady pleased for ever,
 How pleasant for the heart, as well as liver!

CCXIV

The heart is like the sky, a part of heaven,
 But changes night and day, too, like the
 sky;
 Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be
 driven,
 And darkness and destruction as on high:
 But when it hath been scorch'd, and
 pierced, and riven,
 Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye
 Pours forth at last the heart's blood turn'd
 to tears,
 Which make the English climate of our
 years.

CCXV

The liver is the lazaret of bile,
 But very rarely executes its function,
 For the first passion stays there such a while,
 That all the rest creep in and form a
 junction,
 Like knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil,
 Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, com-
 punction,
 So that all mischiefs spring up from this
 entrail,
 Like earthquakes from the hidden fire
 call'd 'central.'

In the mean time, without proceeding more
 In this anatomy, I've finish'd now
 Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
 That being about the number I'll allow
 Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
 And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
 Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
 For them and theirs with all who deign to
 read.

CANTO THE THIRD

I

HAIL, Muse! *et cætera*.—We left Juan
 sleeping,
 Pillow'd upon a fair and happy breast,
 And watch'd by eyes that never yet knew
 weeping,
 And loved by a young heart, too deeply
 blest
 To feel the poison through her spirit
 creeping,
 Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
 Had soil'd the current of her sinless years,
 And turn'd her pure heart's purest blood
 to tears!

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
 Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah
 why
 With cypress branches hast thou wreathed
 thy bowers,
 And made thy best interpreter a sigh?

As those who dote on odours pluck the
flowers,
And place them on their breast—but
place to die—
Thus the frail beings we would fondly
cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

III

In her first passion woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over
And fits her loosely—like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to
prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can
move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much en-
cumber.

IV

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing's pretty sure; a woman
planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in
prayers)—
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly
granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had
none,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

V

'Tis melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can com-
bine,
Although they both are born in the same
clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from
wine—
A sad, sour, sober beverage—by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour,
Down to a very homely household savour.

VI

There's something of antipathy, as 'twere,
Between their present and their future
state;
A kind of flattery that's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late—
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at
such a rate;
For instance—passion in a lover's glo-
rious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

VII

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond;
They sometimes also get a little tired

(But that, of course, is rare), and then de-
spond:

The same things cannot always be ad-
mired,
Yet 'tis 'so nominated in the bond,'
That both are tied till one shall have
expired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was
adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into
mourning.

VIII

There's doubtless something in domestic
doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithe-
sis;
Romances paint at full length people's
wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There's nothing wrong in a connubial
kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's
wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

IX

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might dis-
parage
The worlds to come of both, or fall be-
neath,
And then both worlds would punish
their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-
book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

X

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or mar-
riage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affec-
tion
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some
bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connexion
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much
to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you
conceive.

XI

Some persons say that Dante meant
theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require
apology,
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,

Unless indeed it was from his own know-
ledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason
why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecsta-
tics
Meant to personify the mathematics.

XII

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not
fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they
were;
Then if you'd have them wedded, please
to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous
pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

XIII

Yet they were happy,—happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every
visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's:
When we have what we like, 'tis hard to
miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

XIV

Let not his mode of raising cash seem
strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every
nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler
range
Of life, and in an honest vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery
journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

XV

The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some impor-
tant captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
Although a squall or two had damp'd
his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had
chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chap-
ters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and
collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred
dollars.

XVI

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots; some
he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being
old):
The rest—save here and there some richer
one,
Reserved for future ransom—in the hold,
Were link'd alike, as for the common
people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

XVII

The merchandise was served in the same
way,
Pieced out for different marts in the
Levant,
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks,
teapot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
All which selected from the spoil he
gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of
fathers.

XVIII

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and
kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw—
A terrier, too, which once had been a
Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing
a pittance.
These to secure in this strong blowing
weather,
He caged in one huge hamper all together.

XIX

Then having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and
there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his
daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal
and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many
a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

XX

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quaran-
tine
To ask him awkward questions on the way,
About the time and place where he had
been:

He left his ship to be hove down next day,
 With orders to the people to careen;
 So that all hands were busy beyond
 measure,
 In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and
 treasure.

XXI

Arriving at the summit of a hill
 Which overlook'd the white walls of his
 home,
 He stopp'd.—What singular emotions fill
 Their bosoms who have been induced to
 roam!
 With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—
 With love for many, and with fears for
 some;
 All feelings which o'erleap the years long
 lost,
 And bring our hearts back to their start-
 ing-post.

XXII

The approach of home to husbands and to
 sires,
 After long travelling by land or water,
 Most naturally some small doubt in-
 spires—
 A female family's a serious matter;
 (None trusts the sex more, or so much
 admires—
 But they hate flattery, so I never flatter;)
 Wives in their husbands' absences grow
 subtler,
 And daughters sometimes run off with the
 butler.

XXIII

An honest gentleman at his return
 May not have the good fortune of
 Ulysses;
 Not all lone matrons for their husbands
 mourn,
 Or show the same dislike to suitors'
 kisses;
 The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
 To his memory—and two or three
 young misses
 Born to some friend, who holds his wife
 and riches;—
 And that *his* Argus bites him by—the
 breeches.

XXIV

If single, probably his plighted fair
 Has in his absence wedded some rich
 miser;
 But all the better, for the happy pair
 May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,
 He may resume his amatory care
 As cavalier servente, or despise her;
 And that his sorrow may not be a dumb
 one,
 Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

XXV

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
 Some chaste *liaison* of the kind—I
 mean
 An honest friendship with a married
 lady—
 The only thing of this sort ever seen
 To last—of all connexions the most
 steady,
 And the true Hymen, (the first's but a
 screen)—
 Yet for all that keep not too long away;
 I've known the absent wrong'd four times
 a day.

XXVI

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
 Much less experience of dry land than
 ocean,
 On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt
 glad;
 But not knowing metaphysics, had no
 notion
 Of the true reason of his not being sad,
 Or that of any other strong emotion;
 He loved his child, and would have wept
 the loss of her,
 But knew the cause no more than a philo-
 sopher.

XXVII

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
 His garden trees all shadowy and green;
 He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
 The distant dog-bark; and perceived
 between
 The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun,
 The moving figures, and the sparkling
 sheen
 Of arms (in the East all arm)—and various
 dyes
 Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

XXVIII

And as the spot where they appear he
 nears,
 Surprised at these unwonted signs of
 idling,
 He hears—alas! no music of the spheres,
 But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of
 fiddling!
 A melody which made him doubt his ears,
 The cause being past his guessing or un-
 riddling;
 A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
 A most unoriental roar of laughter.

XXIX

And still more nearly to the place ad-
 vancing,
 Descending rather quickly the declivity,
 Through the waved branches, o'er the
 greensward glancing,
 'Midst other indications of festivity,

CANTO III]

DON JUAN

Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
 Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot,
 he
 Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so
 martial,
 To which the Levantines are very partial.

xxx

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
 The first and tallest her white kerchief
 waving,
 Were strung together like a row of pearls,
 Link'd hand in hand, and dancing: each
 too having
 Down her white neck long floating auburn
 curls—
 (The least of which would set ten poets
 raving);
 Their leader sang—and bounded to her
 song,
 With choral step and voice, the virgin
 throng.

xxxix

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round
 their trays,
 Small social parties just begun to dine;
 Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
 And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
 And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
 Above them their dessert grew on its
 vine,
 The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
 Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd,
 their mellow store.

xxxix

A band of children, round a snow-white
 ram,
 There wreath his venerable horns with
 flowers;
 While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
 The patriarch of the flock all gently
 cowers
 His sober head, majestically tame,
 Or eats from out the palm, or playful
 lowers
 His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
 Yielding to their small hands, draws back
 again.

xxxix

Their classical profiles, and glittering
 dresses,
 Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic
 cheeks,
 Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long
 tresses,
 The gesture which enchants, the eye that
 speaks,
 The innocence which happy childhood
 blesses,
 Made quite a picture of these little
 Greeks;

So that the philosophical beholder
 Sigh'd for their sakes—that they should
 e'er grow older.

xxxix

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
 To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,
 Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
 Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
 Of charms to make good gold and cure
 bad ails,
 Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the
 knockers,
 Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
 Transform'd their lords to beasts (but
 that's a fact).

xxxix

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
 For the imagination or the senses,
 Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the
 Persian,
 All pretty pastimes in which no offence
 is;
 But Lambro saw all these things with
 aversion,
 Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
 Dreading that climax of all human ills
 The inflammation of his weekly bills.

xxxix

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
 The happiest mortals even after dinner!
 A day of gold from out an age of iron
 Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner;
 Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least)'s a
 siren,
 That lures, to flay alive, the young be-
 ginner;
 Lambro's reception at his people's ban-
 quet
 Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

xxxix

He—being a man who seldom used a word
 Too much, and wishing gladly to sur-
 prise
 (In general he surprised men with the
 sword)
 His daughter—had not sent before to
 advise
 Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd;
 And long he paused to reasssure his eyes,
 In fact much more astonish'd than de-
 lighted,
 To find so much good company invited.

xxxix

He did not know (alas! how men will lie!)
 That a report (especially the Greeks)
 Avouch'd his death (such people never
 die),
 And put his house in mourning several
 weeks,—

DON JUAN

[CANTO III

But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had return'd to
Haidée's cheeks.
Her tears, too, being return'd into their
fount,
She now kept house upon her own ac-
count.

XXXIX

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine,
and fiddling,
Which turn'd the isle into a place of
pleasure;
The servants all were getting drunk or
idling,
A life which made them happy beyond
measure.
Her father's hospitality seem'd middling,
Compared with what Haidée did with
his treasure;
'Twas wonderful how things went on im-
proving,
While she had not one hour to spare from
loving.

XL

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this
feast,
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the
least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He show'd the royal *penchants* of a pirate.

XLI

You're wrong.—He was the mildest man-
ner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat,
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

XLII

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the highest
guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He asked the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had ad-
dress'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

XLIII

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
'Talking's dry work, I have no time to
spare.'

A second hiccup'd, 'Our old master's
dead,
You'd better ask our mistress who's his
heir.'
'Our mistress!' quoth a third: 'Our mis-
tress!—pooh—
You mean our master—not the old, but
new.'

XLIV

These rascals, being new comers, knew
not whom
They thus address'd—and Lambro's
visage fell—
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously
to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to re-
sume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into
a matron.

XLV

'I know not,' quoth the fellow, 'who or
what
He is, nor whence he came—and little
care;
But this I know, that this roast capon's fat,
And that good wine ne'er wash'd down
better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour
there;
He'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself con-
verse.'

XLVI

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he show'd the best of
breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of
nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons ex-
ceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near rela-
tions,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleed-
ing,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

XLVII

Now in a person used to much com-
mand—
To bid men come, and go, and come
again—
To see his orders done, too, out of hand—
Whether the word was death, or but the
chain—

It may seem strange to find his manners
 bland;
 Yet such things are, which I cannot ex-
 plain,
 Though doubtless he who can command
 himself
 Is good to govern—almost as a Gueff.

XLVIII

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
 But never in his real and serious mood;
 Then calm, concentrated, and still, and
 slow,
 He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;
 With him it never was a word and blow,
 His angry word once o'er, he shed no
 blood,
 But in his silence there was much to rue,
 And his *one* blow left little work for *two*.

XLIX

He ask'd no further questions, and pro-
 ceeded
 On to the house, but by a private way,
 So that the few who met him hardly
 heeded,
 So little they expected him that day;
 If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
 For Haidee's sake, is more than I can
 say,
 But certainly to one deem'd dead return-
 ing,
 This revel seem'd a curious mode of
 mourning.

L

If all the dead could now return to life,
 (Which God forbid!) or some, or a
 great many,
 For instance, if a husband or his wife
 (Nuptial examples are as good as any),
 No doubt, whate'er might be their former
 strife,

The present weather would be much
 more rainy—
 Tears shed into the grave of the connexion
 Would share most probably its resur-
 rection.

LI

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
 A thing to human feelings the most
 trying,
 And harder for the heart to overcome,
 Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of
 dying;
 To find our hearthstone turn'd into a
 tomb,
 And round its once warm precincts
 palely lying
 The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
 Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

LII

He enter'd in the house—his home no
 more,
 For without hearts there is no home;—
 and felt
 The solitude of passing his own door
 Without a welcome: *there* he long had
 dwelt,
 There his few peaceful days Time had
 swept o'er,
 There his warm bosom and keen eye
 would melt
 Over the innocence of that sweet child,
 His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

LIII

He was a man of a strange temperament,
 Of mild demeanour though of savage
 mood,
 Moderate in all his habits, and content
 With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
 Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and
 meant
 For something better, if not wholly
 good;
 His country's wrongs and his despair to
 save her
 Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

LIV

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
 The hardness by long habitude pro-
 duced,
 The dangerous life in which he had grown
 old,
 The mercy he had granted oft abused,
 The sights he was accusom'd to behold,
 The wild seas, and wild men with whom
 he cruised,
 Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
 And made him a good friend, but bad
 acquaintance.

LV

But something of the spirit of old Greece
 Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
 Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
 His predecessors in the Colchian days;
 'Tis true he had no ardent love for peace—
 Alas! his country show'd no path to
 praise:

Hate to the world and war with every
 nation
 He waged, in vengeance of her degrada-
 tion.

LVI

Still o'er his mind the influence of the
 clime
 Shed its Ionian elegance, which show'd
 Its power unconsciously full many a
 time,—
 A taste seen in the choice of his abode,

DON JUAN

[CANTO III

A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that
flow'd
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedew'd his spirit in his calmer hours.

LVI

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
On that beloved daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart un-
closed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and
seen,
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kind-
ness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with
blindness.

LVIII

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the
flock;
The ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
But violent things will sooner bear as-
suaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

LIX

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive—
they
In whom our brightest days we would re-
trace,
Our little selves re-formed in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our
day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite
alone,
But in good company—the gout or stone.

LX

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after
dinner);
'Tis beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't
thin her);
Like cherubs round an altar-piece they
cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shine like a guinea and seven-shilling
pieces.

LXI

Old Lambro pass'd unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride:

An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every
side;
Gems, gold, and silver, form'd the service
mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

LXII

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts—in short, all
meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and
the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in
nets,
Drest to a Sybarite's most pamper'd wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes
it best for use.

LXIII

These were ranged round, each in its
crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves
closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
The hand from burning underneath
them placed;
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were
boil'd
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they
spoil'd.

LXIV

The hangings of the room were tapestry,
made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk
inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border
too;
The upper border, richly wrought, dis-
play'd,
Embroider'd d'elicate'ly o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

LXV

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a
kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to
the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his
hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You
will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's
treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.

LXVI

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic, or Eclectic—
(For that's the name they like to pray
beneath)—

But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the
breath,—

And show that late hours, wine, and love
are able

To do not much less damage than the table.

LXVII

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale
blue;

Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment—and appear'd quite
new;

The velvet cushions (for a throne more
meet)

Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre
grew

A sunemboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

LXVIII

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour;
Indian mats

And Persian carpets, which the heart bled
to stain,

Over the floors were spread; gazelles
and cats,

And dwarfs and blacks, and such like
things that gain

Their bread as ministers and favourites
—(that's

To say, by degradation)—mingled there
As plentiful as in a court or fair.

LXIX

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid

With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at
hand,

Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods
made,

Fretted with gold or silver:—by command,
The greater part of these were ready
spread

With viands and sherbets in ice—and
wine—

Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

LXX

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's:

She wore two jelicks—one was of pale
yellow;

Of azure, pink, and white was her
chemise—

'Neath which her breast heaved like a
little billow,

DON JUAN

With buttons form'd of pearls as large as
peas,

All gold and crimson shone her jelick's
fellow,

And the striped white gauze baracan that
bound her,

Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd
round her.

LXXI

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely
arm,

Lockless—so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without
harm,

The limb which it adorn'd its only
mould;

So beautiful—its very shape would charm,
And clinging as if loath to lose its hold,

The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

LXXII

Around, as princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd

Announced her rank; twelve rings were on
her hand;

Her hair was starr'd with gems; her
veil's fine fold

Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could
scarce be told;

Her orange silk full Turkish trousers
furl'd

About the prettiest ankle in the world.

LXXIII

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her
heel

Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which
the sun

Dyes with his morning light,—and would
conceal

Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem'd resentfully to feel

The silken fillet's curb, and sought to
shun

Their bonds when'er some Zephyr caught
began

To offer his young pinion as her fan.

LXXIV

Round her she made an atmosphere of
life,

The very air seem'd lighter from her
eyes,

They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,

And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human
ties;

Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

DON JUAN

[CANTO III

LXXV

Her eyelashes, though dark as night,
were tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly
fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but
again
The power of art was turn'd to nothing,
for
They could not look more rosy than before.

LXXVI

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly
fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will
break
On mountain-tops more heavenly white
than her:
The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakspeare also says, 'tis very silly
'To gild refined gold, or paint the lily.'

LXXVII

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might
behold.
Like small stars through the milky way
apparent;
His turban furl'd in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidée's hair
in't
Surmounted, as its clasp, a glowing
crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

LXXVIII

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing-girls, black eunuchs,
and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to
show it;
His verses rarely wanted their due feet—
And for his theme—he seldom sung
below it,
He being paid to satirise or flatter,
As the psalm says, 'inditing a good
matter.'

LXXIX

He praised the present, and abused the
past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to no
praise—

For some few years his lot had been o'er-
cast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse
like Crashaw.

LXXX

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any
needle;
His polar star being one which rather
ranges,
And not the fix'd—he knew the way to
wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft
avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when
fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention—
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate
pension.

LXXXI

But he had genius,—when a turncoat has it,
The 'Vates irritabilis' takes care
That without notice few full moons shall
pass it;
Even good men like to make the public
stare:—
But to my subject—let me see—what was
it?—
Oh!—the third canto—and the pretty
pair—
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and
dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when
half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely
guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to
bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second
cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and
ends
Of free thoughts in his travels, for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among
friends,
That without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself
amends;
And singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

LXXXIV

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs,
 Turks, and Franks,
 And knew the self-loves of the different
 nations;
 And having lived with people of all ranks,
 Had something ready upon most occasions—
 Which got him a few presents and some
 thanks.
 He varied with some skill his adulations;
 To 'do at Rome as Romans do,' a piece
 Of conduct was which he observed in
 Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was asked to sing,
 He gave the different nations something
 national;
 'Twas all the same to him—'God save the
 king.'
 Or '*Ca ira*,' according to the fashion all:
 His muse made increment of anything,
 From the high lyric down to the low
 rational:
 If Pindar sang horse-races, what should
 hinder
 Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a
 chanson;
 In England a six-canto quarto tale;
 In Spain he'd make a ballad or romance on
 The last war—much the same in Portu-
 gal;
 In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on
 Would be old Goethe's—(see what says
 De Staël);
 In Italy he'd ape the 'Trecentisti';
 In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn
 like this t' ye:

1

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and
 sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phœbus
 sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse:
 Their place of birth alone is mute
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

3

The mountains look on Marathon—
 And Marathon looks on the sea;
 And musing there an hour alone,

I dream'd that Greece might still be
 free;
 For standing on the Persians' grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
 Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
 And ships, by thousands, lay below,
 And men in nations;—all were his!
 He counted them at break of day—
 And when the sun set where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
 My country? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now—
 The heroic bosom beats no more!
 And must thy lyre, so long divine,
 Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
 To feel at least a patriot's shame,
 Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
 For what is left the poet here?
 For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
 Must we but blush?—Our fathers dead!
 Earth! render back from out thy breast
 A remnant of our Spartan dead!
 Of the three hundred grant but three,
 To make a new Thermopylæ!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
 Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
 Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
 And answer, 'Let one living head,
 But one arise,—we come, we come!'
 'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
 Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
 Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
 And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
 Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
 How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
 Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
 Of two such lessons, why forget
 The nobler and the manlier one?
 You have the letters Cadmus gave—
 Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 We will not think of themes like these!
 It made Anacreon's song divine:
 He served—but served Polycrates—
 A tyrant; but our masters then
 Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best and bravest
 friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
 Oh! that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind!
 Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the Doric mothers bore;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
 They have a king who buys and sells;
 In native swords, and native ranks,
 The only hope of courage dwells:
 But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
 Would break your shield, however
 broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
 I see their glorious black eyes shine;
 But gazing on each glowing maid,
 My own the burning tear-drop laves,
 To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
 Where nothing, save the waves and I,
 May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
 There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
 A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
 Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should
 have sung,
 The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
 If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece
 was young,
 Yet in these times he might have done
 much worse:
 His strain display'd some feeling—right or

And feeling, in a poet, is the source
 Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
 And take all colours—like the hands of
 dyers.

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of
 ink,
 Falling like dew, upon a thought, pro-
 duces
 That which makes thousands, perhaps
 millions, think;
 'Tis strange, the shortest letter which
 man uses
 Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
 Of ages; to what straits old Time re-
 duces
 Frail man, when paper—even a rag like
 this,
 Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's
 his!

LXXXIX

And when his bones are dust, his grave a
 blank,
 His station, generation, even his nation,
 Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
 In chronological commemoration,
 Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
 Or graven stone found in a barrack's
 station
 In digging the foundation of a closet,
 May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

XC

And glory long has made the sages smile;
 'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
 wind—
 Depending more upon the historian's style
 Than on the name a person leaves be-
 hind:
 Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to
 Hoyle:
 The present century was growing blind
 To the great Marlborough's skill in giving
 knocks,
 Until his late Life by Archdeacon Cox.

XCI

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;
 A little heavy, but no less divine:
 An independent being in his day—
 Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and
 wine;
 But his life falling into Johnson's way,
 We're told this great high priest of all
 the Nine
 Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd
 spouse,
 For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

XCII

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts,
 Like Shakspeare's stealing deer, Lord
 Bacon's bribes;
 Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest
 acts;
 Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well
 describes);

Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although
truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the
scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

XCIII

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantiso-
cracy';
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who
then
Season'd his pedlar poems with de-
mocracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same
path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geo-
graphy;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare
biography,
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is
bigger
Than any since the birthday of typo-
graphy;
A drowsy, frowzy poem, call'd the 'Excur-
sion,'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

XCV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect:
But Wordsworth's poem, and his fol-
lowers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which, in this century don't
strike
The public mind,—so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale
virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divi-
nities.

XCVI

But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression,
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression:
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing
session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

XCVII

I know that what our neighbours call
'longueurs,'
(We've not so good a *word*, but have the
thing,

In that complete perfection which insures
An epic from Bob Southey every
Spring—)
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 'twould not be hard to
bring
Some fine examples of the *epopée*,
To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, 'Homer some-
times sleeps';
We feel without him, Wordsworth
sometimes wakes,—
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear 'Waggoners,' around his
lakes.
He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps—
Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he
makes
Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal
plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his 'Wa-
Could he not beg the loan of Ch-
Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag
on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the
moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

C

'Pedlars,' and 'Boats,' and 'Waggoners!'
Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to
this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these
Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves
may hiss—
The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel'!

CI

T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves
gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all
retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky ad-
mired;—
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worth-
iest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I so
 oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
 While swung the deep bell in the distant
 tower,
 Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
 And not a breath crept through the rosy
 air,
 And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd
 with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
 Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love!
 Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
 Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
 Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
 Those downcast eyes beneath the Al-
 mighty dove—
 What though 'tis but a pictured image?
 —strike,
 That painting is no idol,—'tis too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
 In nameless print—that I have no devo-
 tion;
 But set those persons down with me to
 pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest
 notion
 Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
 My altars are the mountains and the
 ocean,
 Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the
 great Whole,
 Who hath produced, and will receive the
 soul.

CV

Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
 Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
 Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial
 wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave
 flow'd o'er,
 To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
 And Dryden's lay made haunted ground
 to me,
 How have I loved the twilight hour and
 thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one cease-
 less song,
 Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and
 mine,
 And vesper bell's that rose the boughs
 along;

The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
 His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the
 fair throng
 Which learn'd from this example not to fly
 From a true lover,—shadow'd my mind's
 eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good
 things—
 Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
 To the young bird the parent's brooding
 wings,
 The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd
 steer;
 Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone
 clings,
 Whate'er our household gods protect of
 dear,
 Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
 Thou bring'st the child, too, to the
 mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts
 the heart
 Of those who sail the seas, on the first
 day
 When they from their sweet friends are
 torn apart;
 Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
 As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
 Seeming to weep the dying day's decay:
 Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
 Ah! surely nothing dies but something
 mourns!

CIX

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
 Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
 Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
 Of nations freed, and the world over-
 joy'd,
 Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon
 his tomb:
 Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
 Of feeling for some kindness done, when
 power
 Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

CX

But I'm digressing; what on earth has
 Nero,
 Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
 To do with the transactions of my hero,
 More than such madmen's fellow man
 —the moon's?
 Sure my invention must be down at zero,
 And I grown one of many 'wooden
 spoons'
 Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs
 please
 To dub the last of honours in degrees).

I feel this tediousness will never do—
 'Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
 (In copying) this long canto into two;
 They'll never find it out, unless I own
 The fact, excepting some experienced few;
 And then as an improvement 'twill be
 shown:
 I'll prove that such the opinion of the
 critic is
 From Aristotle *passim*.—See ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΑ.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

NOTHING so difficult as a beginning
 In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
 For oftentimes when Pegasus seems win-
 ning
 The race, he sprains a wing, and down
 we tend,
 Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for
 sinning;
 Our sin the same, and hard as his to
 mend,
 Being pride, which leads the mind to soar
 too far,
 Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

But time, which brings all beings to their
 level,
 And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
 Man,—and, as we would hope,—perhaps
 the devil,
 That neither of their intellects are vast:
 While youth's hot wishes in our red veins
 revel,
 We know not this—the blood flows on
 too fast:
 But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
 We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
 And wish'd that others held the same
 opinion;
 They took it up when my days grew more
 mellow,
 And other minds acknowledged my
 dominion:
 Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
 Leaf,' and Imagination droops her
 pinion,
 And the sad truth which hovers o'er my
 desk
 Turns what was once romantic to bur-
 lesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
 'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
 'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
 Itself to apathy, for we must steep

Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's
 spring,
 Ere what we least wish to behold will
 sleep:
 Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
 A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

Some have accused me of a strange design
 Against the creed and morals of the
 land,
 And trace it in this poem every line;
 I don't pretend that I quite understand
 My own meaning when I would be very fine;
 But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
 Unless it were to be a moment merry,
 A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
 This way of writing will appear exotic;
 Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
 Who sang when chivalry was more
 Quixotic,
 And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
 True knights, chaste dames, huge giant
 kings despotic:
 But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
 I chose a modern subject as more meet.

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
 Perhaps no better than they have treated
 me,
 Who have imputed such designs as show
 Not what they saw, but what they
 wish'd to see;
 But if it gives them pleasure, be it so,
 This is a liberal age, and thoughts are
 free:
 Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
 And tells me to resume my story here.

VIII

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
 To their own hearts' most sweet society;
 Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
 With his rude scythe such gentle
 bosoms; he
 Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
 Though foe to love; and yet they could
 not be
 Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
 Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

IX

Their faces were not made for wrinkles,
 their
 Pure blood to stagnate, their great
 hearts to fail;
 The blank grey was not made to blast their
 hair,
 But like the climes that know nor snow
 nor hail,

They were all summer; lightning might
assail

And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them—they had too little clay.

X

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years—the
river

Damm'd from its fountain—the child from
the knee

And breast maternal wean'd at once for
ever,—

Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart—

XI

The heart—which may be broken: happy
they!

Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile
mould,

The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er
behold

The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never
told;

While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

XII

'Whom the gods love die young' was said
of yore,

And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays
even more—

The death of friendship, love, youth, all
that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent
shore

Awaits at last even those who longest
miss

The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early
grave

Which men weep over may be meant to
save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead.
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd
made for them:

They found no fault with Time, save that
he fled;

They saw not in themselves ought to
condemn;

Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a
gem,

And knew such brightness was but the
reflection

Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling
touch,

The least glance better understood than
words,

Which still said all, and ne'er could say
too much;

A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing
such

As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem
absurd

To those who have ceased to hear such, or
ne'er heard.

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children
still,

And children still they should have ever
been;

They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,

But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen

To pass their lives in fountains and on
flowers,

And never know the weight of human
hours.

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and
changeless found

Those their bright rise had lighted to
such joys

As rarely they beheld throughout their
round;

And these were not of the vain kind
which cloy,

For theirs were buoyant spirits, never
bound

By the mere senses; and that which de-
stroys

Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more en-
dear'd.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!

But theirs was love in which the mind
delights

To lose itself, when the old world grows
dull,

And we are sick of its hack sounds and
sights,

Intrigues, adventures of the common
school,

Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one

strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a
whore.

XVIII

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.

Enough.—The faithful and the fairy pair,

Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?

Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were

Inherent; what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,

But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,

For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,

And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no dearest for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

XX

They gazed upon the sunset; 'tis an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power

Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,

When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;

Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,

And swept, as 'twere, across their hearts' delight,

Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,

When one is shook in sound, and one in sight:

And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,

And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,

While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate

And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date

With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone.

Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate—

He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,

His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort

Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:

Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,

And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;

When Juan spoke, too—it might be in sport—

Of this their mutual feeling, she replied—

'If it should be so,—but—it cannot be—
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she press'd

His lips to hers, and silenced him with this,

And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,

Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 'tis the best:

Some people prefer wine—'tis not amiss;

I have tried both; so those who would a part take

May choose between the headache and the heartache.

XXV

One of the two according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo;

Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;

And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,

And then decide, without great wrong to either,

It were much better to have both than neither.

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,

Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother;

All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,

And love too much, and yet cannot love less;

But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

DON JUAN

[CANTO IV

XXVII

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die?—they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit—not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care;
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air;

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind—
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind:
Strange state of being! (for 'tis still to be),
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to

XXXI

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;

And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high—
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

XXXII

Anon—she was released, and then she stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made;
And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'Twas white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed and grasp'd,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

XXXIII

The dream changed:—in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles; the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell,—she thought.

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear, (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!)
Lay Juan, nor could rught renew the beat
Of his quench'd hear-; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new—
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew—
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'Tis—'tis her father's—fix'd upon the pair!

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking
 fell,
 With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to
 see
 Him whom she deem'd a habitant where
 dwell
 The ocean-buried, risen from death, to
 be
 Perchance the death of one she loved too
 well:
 Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
 It was a moment of that awful kind——
 I have seen such—but must not call to
 mind.

XXXVII

Up Juan sprang to Haidée's bitter shriek,
 And caught her falling, and from off the
 wall
 Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to
 wreak
 Vengeance on him who was the cause of
 all:
 Then Lambro, who till now forbore to
 speak,
 Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my
 call,
 A thousand scimitars await the word;
 Put up, young man, put up your silly
 sword.'

XXXVIII

And Haidée clung around him; 'Juan,
 'tis—
 'Tis Lambro—'tis my father! Kneel
 with me—
 He will forgive us—yes—it must be—yes.
 Oh! dearest father, in this agony
 Of pleasure and of pain—even while I kiss
 Thy garment's hem with transport, can
 it be
 That doubt should mingle with my filial
 joy?
 Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this
 boy.'

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
 Calm in his voice, and calm within his
 eye—
 Not always signs with him of calmest
 mood:
 He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
 Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the
 blood
 Oft came and went, as there resolved to
 die;
 In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
 On the first foe whom Lambro's call might
 bring.

XL

'Young man, your sword;' so Lambro
 once more said:
 Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is
 free.'
 The old man's cheek grew pale, but not
 with dread,
 And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
 Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own
 head.'
 Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
 'Twas fresh—for he had lately used the
 lock—
 And next proceeded quietly to cock.

XLI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
 That cocking of a pistol, when you know
 A moment more will bring the sight to bear
 Upon your person, twelve yards off, or
 so;
 A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
 If you have got a former friend for foe;
 But after being fired at once or twice,
 The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more
 Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's
 breath,
 When Haidée threw herself her boy be-
 fore;
 Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried,
 'let death
 Descend—the fault is mine; this fatal
 shore
 He found—but sought not. I have
 pledged my faith;
 I love him—I will die with him: I knew
 Your nature's firmness—know your daugh-
 ter's too.'

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
 And tenderness, and infancy; but now
 She stood as one who champion'd human
 fears—
 Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo'd
 the blow;
 And tall beyond her sex, and their com-
 peers,
 She drew up to her height, as if to show
 A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
 Her father's face—but never stopp'd his
 hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him; 'twas
 strange
 How like they look'd! the expression
 was the same;
 Serenely savage, with a little change
 In the large dark eye's mutual-darted
 flame;

DON JUAN

[CANTO IV

For she, too, was as one who could
 avenge,
 If cause should be—a lioness, though
 tame;
 Her father's blood before her father's face
 Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
 Their stature, differing but in sex and
 years:
 Even to the delicacy of their hand
 There was resemblance, such as true
 blood wears;
 And now to see them, thus divided, stand
 In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears,
 And sweet sensations, should have wel-
 comed both,
 Show what the passions are in their full
 growth.

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then with-
 drew
 His weapon, and replaced it; but stood
 still,
 And looking on her, as to look her through,
 'Not I,' he said, 'have sought this
 stranger's ill;
 Not I have made this desolation: few
 Would bear such outrage, and forbear
 to kill;
 But I must do my duty—how thou hast
 Done thine, the present vouches for the
 past.

XLVII

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
 His own shall roll before you like a
 ball!'
 He raised his whistle as the word he said,
 And blew; another answer'd to the call,
 And rushing in disorderly, though led,
 And arm'd from boot to turban, one
 and all,
 Some twenty of his train came, rank on
 rank;
 He gave the word, 'Arrest or slay the
 Frank.'

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he with-
 drew
 His daughter; while compress'd within
 his clasp,
 'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
 In vain she struggled in her father's
 grasp—
 His arms were like a serpent's coil: then
 flew
 Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
 The file of pirates: save the foremost, who
 Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut
 through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open; but
 The third, a wary, cool old swordsman,
 took
 The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
 His own well in; so well, ere you could
 look,
 His man was floor'd, and helpless at his
 foot,
 With the blood running like a little
 brook
 From two smart sabre gashes, deep and
 red—
 One on the arm, the other on the head.

L

And then they bound him where he fell,
 and bore
 Juan from the apartment: with a sign
 Old Lambro bade them take him to the
 shore,
 Where lay some ships which were to sail
 at nine.
 They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
 Until they reach'd some galliots, placed
 in line;
 On board of one of these, and under
 hatches,
 They stow'd him, with strict orders to the
 watches.

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
 And here was one exceedingly un-
 pleasant:
 A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
 Handsome and young, enjoying all the
 present,
 Just at the very time when he least broods
 On such a thing, is suddenly to sea sent,
 Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot
 move,
 And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
 Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears,
 green tea!
 Than whom Cassandra was not more pro-
 phetic;
 For if my pure libations exceed three,
 I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
 That I must have recourse to black
 Bohea:
 'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,
 For tea and coffee leave us much more
 serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
 Sweet Nalad of the Phlegthontic rill!
 Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
 And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers
 ill?

I would take refuge in weak punch, but
rack

(In each sense of the word), whence'er I
 fill

My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
 Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe—
 Not sound, poor fellow, but severely
 wounded;

Yet could his corporal pangs amount to
 half

Of those with which his Haidée's bosom
 bounded!

She was not one to weep, and rave, and
 chafe,

And then give way, subdued because
 surrounded;

Her mother was a Moorish maid from Fez,
 Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
 In marble founts; there grain, and flour,
 and fruit,

Gush from the earth until the land runs
 o'er;

But there, too, many a poison-tree has
 root,

And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
 And long, long deserts scorch the

camel's foot,

Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
 And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

LVI

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth

Her human clay is kindled; full of power
 For good or evil, burning from its birth,

The Moorish blood partakes the planet's
 hour,

And like the soil beneath it will bring
 forth:

Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's
 dower;

But her large dark eye show'd deep
 Passion's force,

Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,

Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth,
 and fair,

Till slowly charged with thunder they dis-
 play

Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
 Had held till now her soft and milky way;

But overwrought with passion and des-
 pair,

The fire burst forth from her Numidian
 veins,

Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted
 plains.

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's
 gore,

And he himself o'er-master'd and cut
 down;

His blood was running on the very floor
 Where late he trod, her beautiful, her

own;

Thus much she view'd an instant and no
 more,—

Her struggles ceased with one convul-
 sive groan;

On her sire's arm, which until now scarce
 held

Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure
 dyes

Were dabbled with the deep blood
 which ran o'er;

And her head droop'd, as when the lily lies
 O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd

handmaids bore

Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
 Of herbs and cordials they produced

their store,

But she defied all means they could em-
 ploy,

Like one life could not hold, nor death
 destroy.

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged,
 though chill—

With nothing livid, still her lips were
 red;

She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent
 still;

No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely
 dead;

Corruption came not in each mind to kill
 All hope; to look upon her sweet face

bred

New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of
 soul—

She had so much, earth could not claim
 the whole.

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
 When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay

there,

But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect
 throws

O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;

O'er the Laocoön's all eternal throes,
 And ever-dying Gladiator's air,

Their energy like life forms all their fame,
 Yet looks not life, for they are still the
 same.

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers
wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat
still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

LXIII

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognised no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room, but all forgot,
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he began a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,

And sung of love; the fierce name struck
through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved
in rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief!—thought came
too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close;—
Hers was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

LXVIII

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep—the power seem'd gone for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus;
at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her passed:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the black—
Oh! to possess such lustre—and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,

CANTO IV]

And went down to the grave unborn,
 wherein
 Blossom and bough lie wither'd with
 one blight;
 In vain the dew of Heaven descend above
 The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of
 love.

LXXI

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on
 her
 Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was
 not made
 Through years or moons the inner weight
 to bear,
 Which colder hearts endure till they are
 laid
 By age in earth: her days and pleasures
 were
 Brief, but delightful—such as had not
 stayed
 Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
 By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to
 dwell.

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd
 away;
 None but her own and father's grave is
 there,
 And nothing outward tells of human
 clay;
 Ye could not know where lies a thing so
 fair,
 No stone is there to show, no tongue to
 say,
 What was; no dirge, except the hollow
 sea's,
 Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
 Sighs o'er her name; and many an
 islander
 With her sire's story makes the night less
 long;
 Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with
 her;
 If she loved rashly, her life paid for
 wrong—
 A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
 In some shape; let none think to fly the
 danger,
 For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

LXXIV

But let me change this theme, which grows
 too sad,
 And lay this sheet of sorrows on the
 shelf;
 I don't much like describing people mad,
 For fear of seeming rather touch'd my-
 self—

DON JUAN

Besides, I've no more on this head to add;
 And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
 We'll put about, and try another tack
 With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas
 back.

LXXV

Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd,
 confined,
 Some days and nights elapsed before
 that he
 Could altogether call the past to mind;
 And when he did, he found himself at
 sea,
 Sailing six knots an hour before the wind;
 The shores of Ilion lay beneath their
 lee—
 Another time he might have liked to see
 'em,
 But now was not much pleased with Cape
 Sigæum.

LXXVI

There, on the green and village-cotted hill,
 is
 (Flank'd by the Hellespont, and by the
 sea)
 Entomb'd the bravest of the brave,
 Achilles;
 They say so—(Bryant says the contrary):
 And further downward, tall and towering
 still, is
 The tumulus—of whom? Heaven
 knows; 't may be
 Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus;
 All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

LXXVII

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
 A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted
 plain,
 And Ida in the distance, still the same,
 And old Scamander (if 'tis he), remain;
 The situation seems still form'd for fame—
 A hundred thousand men might fight
 again,
 With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's
 walls,
 The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise
 crawls;

LXXVIII

Troops of untended horses; here and there,
 Some little hamlets, with new names un-
 couth;
 Some shepherds (unlike Paris), led to stare
 A moment at the European youth
 Whom to the spot their school-boy feel-
 ings bear;
 A Turk, with beads in hand, and pipe
 in mouth,
 Extremely taken with his own religion,
 Are what I found there—but the devil a
 Phrygian.

LXXIX

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
 From his dull cabin, found himself a
 slave;
 Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
 O'ershadow'd there by many a hero's
 grave;
 Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce
 could urge
 A few brief questions; and the answers
 gave
 No very satisfactory information
 About his past or present situation.

LXXX

He saw some fellow-captives, who ap-
 pear'd
 To be Italians, as they were in fact;
 From them, at least, *their* destiny he
 heard,
 Which was an odd one; a troop going
 to act
 In Sicily—all singers, duly rear'd
 In their vocation; had not been attack'd
 In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
 But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

LXXXI

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
 Juan was told about their curious case;
 For although destined to the Turkish
 mart, he
 Still kept his spirits up—at least his face;
 The little fellow really look'd quite hearty,
 And bore him with some gaiety and
 grace,
 Showing a much more reconciled de-
 meanour,
 Than did the prima-donna and the tenor.

LXXXII

In a few words he told their hapless story,
 Saying, 'Our Machiavelian impresario,
 Making a signal off some promontory,
 Hail'd a strange brig; *Corpo di Caio*
 Mario!
 We were transferr'd on board her in a
 hurry,
 Without a single scudo of salario;
 But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
 We will revive our fortunes before long.

LXXXIII

'The prima-donna, though a little old,
 And haggard with a dissipated life,
 And subject, when the house is thin, to
 cold,
 Has some good notes; and then the
 tenor's wife,
 With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
 Last carnival she made a deal of strife,
 By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
 From an old Roman princess at Bologna.

LXXXIV

'And then there are the dancers; there's
 the Nini,
 With more than one profession gains
 by all;
 Then there's that laughing slut the Pele-
 grini,
 She, too, was fortunate last carnival,
 And made at least five hundred good
 zecchini,
 But spends so fast, she has not now a
 paul;
 And then there's the Grottesca—such a
 dancer!
 Where men have souls or bodies she must
 answer.

LXXXV

'As for the figuranti, they are like
 The rest of all that tribe; with here and
 there
 A pretty person, which perhaps may strike,
 The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
 There's one, though tall and stiffer than a
 pike,
 Yet has a sentimental kind of air
 Which might go far, but she don't dance
 with vigour;
 The more's the pity, with her face and
 figure.

LXXXVI

'As for the men, they are a middling set;
 The musico is but a crack'd old basin,
 But being qualified in one way yet,
 May the seraglio do to set his face in,
 And as a servant some preferment get;
 His singing I no further trust can place
 in:
 From all the Pope makes yearly 'twould
 perplex
 To find three perfect pipes of the *third sex*.

LXXXVII

'The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
 And for the bass, the beast can only
 bellow;
 In fact, he had no singing education,
 An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless
 fellow;
 But being the prima-donna's near relation,
 Who swore his voice was very rich and
 mellow,
 They hired him, though to hear him you'd
 believe
 An ass was practising recitative.

LXXXVIII

'Twould not become myself to dwell upon
 My own merits, and though young—
 I see, sir—you
 Have got a travell'd air, which speaks you
 one
 To whom the opera is by no means new:

You've heard of Raucocanti?—I'm the man;

The time may come when you may hear me too;

You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I'm engaged to sing there—
do go.

LXXXIX

'Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not
sweet,

He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the
street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to
breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his
teeth.'

XC

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths;
each threw

A rueful glance upon the waves, (which
bright all

From the blue skies derived a double
blue,

Dancing all free and happy in the sun,)
And then went down the hatchway one by
one.

XCI

They heard next day—that in the Darda-
nelles,

Waiting for his Sublimity's firman,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which everybody does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,

Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chain'd and lotted out per
couple,

For the slave-market of Constantinople.

XCII

It seems when this allotment was made
out,

There chanced to be an odd male, and
odd female,

Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deem'd to be
male,

They placed him o'er the woman as a
scout)

Were link'd together, and it happen'd
the male

Was Juan, who,—an awkward thing at
his age,

Pair'd off with a Bacchante blooming
visage.

XCIII

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain'd
The tenor; these two hated with a hate
Found only on the stage, and each more
pain'd

With this his tuneful neighbour than his
fate;

Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-
grain'd,

Instead of bearing up without debate,
That each pull'd different ways with many
an oath,

'Arcades ambo,' *id est*—blackguards both.

XCIV

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
But bred within the March of old Ancona,
With eyes that look'd into the very soul
(And other chief points of a 'bella
donna'),

Bright—and as black and burning as a coal;
And through her clear brunette com-
plexion shone a

Great wish to please—a most attractive
dower,

Especially when added to the power.

XCV

But all that power was wasted upon him,
For sorrow o'er each sense held stern
command;

Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim:
And though thus chain'd, as natural her
hand

Touch'd his, nor that—nor any handsome
limb

(And she had some not easy to with-
stand)

Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel
brittle;

Perhaps his recent wounds might help a
little.

XCVI

No matter; we should ne'er too much
inquire,

But facts are facts: no knight could be
more true,

And firmer faith no lady-love desire;
We will omit the proofs, save one or two:

'Tis said no one in hand 'can hold a fire
By thought of frosty Caucasus;' but
few,

I really think; yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less
real.

XCVII

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
Having withstood temptation in my
youth,

But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much
truth;

DON JUAN

[CANTO IV

Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the
ship soon,

Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the
camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into
families.

XCVM

'Tis all the same to me; I'm fond of yield-
ing,
And therefore leave them to the purer
page

Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an
age;

I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which
now it shan't.

XCIX

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a
squabble;

But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble,
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to
cease

While the right hand which wrote it still is
able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease;
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to
song.

C

Of poets who come down to us through
distance

Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of
Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of exist-
ence;

Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'Tis as a snow-ball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the
same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow.

CI

And so great names are nothing more than
nominal,

And love of glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all

Who would as 'twere identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which,
entombing all,

Leaves nothing till 'the coming of the
just'—

Save change: I've stood upon Achilles'
tomb,

And heard Troy doubted; time will
doubt of Rome.

CII

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its off-
spring's doom:

Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral
gloom

Which once-named myriads nameless lie
beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

CIII

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-
boy,

Who lived too long for men, but died too
soon

For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to de-
stroy,

Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the
base.

CIV

I pass each day where Dante's bones are
laid:

A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the
warrior's column:

The time must come, when both alike
decay'd,

The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's
volume,

Will sink where lie the songs and wars of
earth,

Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

CV

With human blood that column was
cemented,

With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were
vented

To show his loathing of the spot he
soil'd:

Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds,
from whose wild

Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

CVI

Yet there will still be bards: though fame
is smoke,

Its fumes are frankincense to human
thought;

And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then
they sought:

CANTO IV]

As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
 Thus to their extreme verge the passions
 brought
 Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
 Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

CVII

If in the course of such a life as was
 At once adventurous and contemplative,
 Men who partake all passions as they pass,
 Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
 Their images again as in a glass,
 And in such colours that they seem to
 live;
 You may do right forbidding them to show
 'em,
 But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

CVIII

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
 Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
 Who advertise new poems by your looks,
 Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?
 What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
 Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian
 wrecks?
 Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
 Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea?

CIX

What! can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
 A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press
 darling?
 To bear the compliments of many a bore,
 And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's
 starling;
 Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
 (Because the world won't read him,
 always snarling),
 That taste is gone, that fame is but a
 lottery,
 Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

CX

Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,'
 As some one somewhere sings about the
 sky,
 And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
 They say your stockings are so—
 (Heaven knows why,
 I have examined few pair of that hue);
 Blue as the garters which serenely lie
 Round the patrician left-legs, which adorn
 The festal midnight, and the levée morn.

CXI

Yet some of you are most seraphic crea-
 tures—
 But times are alter'd since, a rhyming
 lover,
 You read my stanzas, and I read your
 features:
 And—but no matter, all those things
 are over;

DON JUAN

Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
 For sometimes such a world of virtues
 cover;
 I knew one woman of that purple school,
 The loveliest, chastest, best, but—quite a
 fool.

CXII

Humboldt, 'the first of travellers,' but not
 The last, if late accounts be accurate,
 Invented, by some name I have forgot,
 As well as the sublime discovery's date,
 An airy instrument, with which he sought
 To ascertain the atmospheric state,
 By measuring 'the intensity of blue':
 Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

CXIII

But to the narrative:—The vessel bound
 With slaves to sell off in the capital,
 After the usual process, might be found
 At anchor under the seraglio wall;
 Her cargo, from the plague being safe and
 sound,
 Were landed in the market, one and all,
 And there with Georgians, Russians, and
 Circassians,
 Bought up for different purposes and
 passions.

CXIV

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred
 dollars
 For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were
 given,
 Warranted virgin; beauty's brightest
 colours
 Had deck'd her out in all the hues of
 heaven:
 Her sale sent home some disappointed
 bawlers,
 Who bade on till the hundreds reached
 eleven;
 But when the offer went beyond, they
 knew
 'Twas for the Sultan, and at once with-
 drew.

CXV

Twelve negroes from Nubia brought a
 price
 Which the West Indian market scarce
 could bring,
 Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it
 twice
 What 'twas ere Abolition; and the thing
 Need not seem very wonderful, for vice
 Is always much more splendid than a
 king:
 The virtues, even the most exalted,
 Charity,
 Are saving—vice spares nothing for a
 rarity.

DON JUAN

[CANTO IV

CXVI

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by pachas,
some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews
As renegadoes; while in hapless group,
Hoping no very old vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they pick'd 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim:

CXVII

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long),
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in't:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call'd in Ossian the fifth Duan.

CANTO THE FIFTH

I

WHEN amatory poets sing their loves
In liquid lines mellifluously bland,
And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,
They little think what mischief is in hand;
The greater their success the worse it proves,
As Ovid's verse may give to understand;
Even Petrarch's self, if judged with due severity,
Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

II

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,
Except in such a way as not to attract;
Plain—simple—short, and by no means inviting,
But with a moral to each error tack'd,
Form'd rather for instructing than delighting,
And with all passions in their turn attack'd;
Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,
This poem will become a moral model.

III

The European with the Asian shore
Sprinkled with palaces; the Ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam;

The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;

The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm'd the charming Mary Montagu.

IV

I have a passion for the name of 'Mary,'
For once it was a magic sound to me;
And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,
Where I beheld what never was to be;
All feelings changed, but this was last to vary,
A spell from which even yet I am not quite free:
But I grow sad—and let a tale grow cold,
Which must not be pathetically told.

V

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;
'Tis a grand sight from off 'the Giant's Grave'
To watch the progress of those rolling seas
Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
Europe and Asia, you being quite at ease:
There's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in,
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine.

VI

'Twas a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
When nights are equal, but not so the days:
The Parcae then cut short the further spinning
Of seamen's fates, and the loud tempests raise
The waters, and repentance for past sinning
In all, who o'er the great deep take their ways:
They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't;
Because if drown'd, they can't—if spared, they won't.

VII

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
And age, and sex, were in the market ranged;
Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
Poor creatures! their good looks were sadly changed.

All save the blacks seem'd jaded with
vexation,
From friends, and home, and freedom
far estranged;
The negroes more philosophy display'd,—
Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be
flay'd.

VIII

Juan was juvenile, and thus was full,
As most at his age are, of hope, and
health;
Yet I must own, he look'd a little dull,
And now and then a tear stole down by
stealth;
Perhaps his recent loss of blood might pull
His spirit down; and then the loss of
wealth,
A mistress, and such comfortable quarters,
To be put up for auction amongst Tartars,

IX

Were things to shake a stoic; ne'ertheless,
Upon the whole his carriage was serene:
His figure, and the splendour of his dress,
Of which some gilded remnants still
were seen,
Drew all eyes on him, giving them to guess
He was above the vulgar by his mien;
And then, though pale, he was so very
handsome;
And then—they calculated on his ransom.

X

Like a backgammon board the place was
dotted
With whites and blacks, in groups on
show for sale,
Though rather more irregularly spotted:
Some bought the jet, while others chose
the pale.
It chanced amongst the other people
lotted,
A man of thirty, rather stout and hale,
With resolution in his dark grey eye,
Next Juan stood, till some might choose to
buy.

XI

He had an English look; that is, was
square
In make, of a complexion white and
ruddy,
Good teeth, with curling rather dark
brown hair,
And, it might be from thought, or toil,
or study,
An open brow a little mark'd with care:
One arm had on a bandage rather
bloody;
And there he stood with such *sang froid*,
that greater
Could scarce be shown even by a mere
spectator.

XII

But seeing at his elbow a mere lad,
Of a high spirit evidently, though
At present weigh'd down by a doom which
had
O'erthrown even men, he soon began to
show
A kind of blunt compassion for the sad
Lot of so young a partner in the woe,
Which for himself he seem'd to deem no
worse
Than any other scrape, a thing of course.

XIII

'My boy!'—said he, 'amidst this motley
crew
Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and
what not,
All ragamuffins differing but in hue,
With whom it is our luck to cast our lot,
The only gentlemen seem I and you;
So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you any consolation,
'Twould give me pleasure.—Pray, what is
your nation?'

XIV

When Juan answer'd—'Spanish!' he re-
plied,
'I thought, in fact, you could not be a
Greek;
Those servile dogs are not so proudly eyed:
Fortune has play'd you here a pretty
freak,
But that's her way with all men, till they're
tried;
But never mind,—she'll turn, perhaps,
next week;
She has served me also much the same as
you,
Except that I have found it nothing new.'

XV

'Pray, sir,' said Juan, 'if I may presume,
What brought you here?'—'Oh! no-
thing very rare—
Six Tartars and a drag-chain——'—'To
this doom
But what conducted, if the question's fair,
Is that which I would learn.'—'I served
for some
Months with the Russian army here and
there;
And taking lately, by Suwarrow's bidding,
A town, was ta'en myself instead of Widdin.'

XVI

'Have you no friends?'—'I had—but, by
God's blessing,
Have not been troubled with them
lately. Now
I have answer'd all your questions without
pressing,
And you an equal courtesy should show.'

'Alas!' said Juan, "twere a tale distress-
ing,
And long besides."—"Oh! if 'tis really
so,
You're right on both accounts to hold
your tongue;
A sad tale saddens doubly when 'tis long.

XVII

'But droop not: Fortune at your time of
life,
Although a female moderately fickle,
Will hardly leave you (as she's not your
wife)
For any length of days in such a pickle.
To strive, too, with our fate were such a
strife
As if the corn-sheaf should oppose the
sickle:
Men are the sport of circumstances, when
The circumstances seem the sport of men.'

XVIII

'Tis not,' said Juan, 'for my present doom
I mourn, but for the past;—I loved a
maid;—
He paused, and his dark eye grew full of
gloom;
A single tear upon his eyelash stayed
A moment, and then dropp'd; 'but to re-
sume,
'Tis not my present lot, as I have said,
Which I deplore so much; for I have borne
Hardships which have the hardest over-
worn,

XIX

'On the rough deep. But this last blow—'
and here
He stopp'd again, and turn'd away his
face.
'Ay,' quoth his friend, 'I thought it would
appear
That there had been a lady in the case;
And these are things which ask a tender
tear,
Such as I, too, would shed if in your
place:
I cried upon my first wife's dying day,
And also when my second ran away:

XX

'My third——'—'Your third!' quoth
Juan, turning round;
'You scarcely can be thirty: have you
three?'
'No—only two at present above ground:
Surely, 'tis nothing wonderful to see
One person thrice in holy wedlock bound!'
'Well, then, your third,' said Juan;
'what did she?
She did not run away, too,—did she, sir?'
'No, faith.'—'What then?'—'I ran away
from her.'

XXI

'You take things coolly, sir,' said Juan.
'Why,'
Replied the other, 'what can a man do?
There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life
is new,
Commence with feelings warm, and pros-
pects high;
But time strips our illusions of their hue,
And one by one in turn, some grand mis-
take
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the
snake.

XXII

'Tis true, it gets another bright and fresh,
Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone
through,
This skin must go the way, too, of all flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or
two;—
Love's the first net which spreads its
deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory,
glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or
praise.'

XXIII

'All this is very fine, and may be true,'
Said Juan, 'but I really don't see how
It betters present times with me or you.'
'No?' quoth the other; 'yet you will allow
By setting things in their right point of view,
Knowledge, at least, is gain'd; for in-
stance, now,
We know what slavery is, and our disasters
May teach us better to behave when masters.'

XXIV

'Would we were masters now, if but to try
Their present lessons on our Pagan
friends here,'
Said Juan—swallowing a heart-burning
sigh:
'Heaven help the scholar, whom his
fortune sends here!'
'Perhaps we shall be one day, by and by,'
Rejoin'd the other, 'when our bad luck
mends here;
Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to
eye us)
I wish to God that somebody would buy
us!

XXV

'But after all, what is our present state?
'Tis bad, and may be better—all men's
lot:
Most men are slaves, none more so than
the great,
To their own whims and passions, and
what not;

Society itself, which should create
Kindness, destroys what little we had
got:
To feel for none is the true social art
Of the world's stoics—men without a
heart.'

XXVI

Just now a black old neutral personage
Of the third sex stepped up, and peering
over
The captives, seem'd to mark their looks
and age,
And capabilities, as to discover
If they were fitted for the purposed cage:
No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a blackleg, broadcloth by a
tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

XXVII

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-
creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous; some
by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place—as tend their years or
natures;
The most by ready cash—but all have
prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their
vices.

XXVIII

The eunuch, having eyed them o'er with
care,
Turn'd to the merchant, and began to
bid
First but for one, and after for the pair;
They haggled, wrangled, swore, too—so
they did!
As though they were in a mere Christian
fair,
Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or
kid;
So that their bargain sounded like a battle
For this superior yoke of human cattle.

XXIX

At last they settled into simple grumbling,
And pulling out reluctant purses, and
Turning each piece of silver o'er, and
tumbling
Some down, and weighing others in
their hand,
And by mistake sequins with paras jumb-
ling,
Until the sum was accurately scann'd,
And then the merchant giving change, and
signing
Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

XXX

I wonder if his appetite was good?
Or, if it were, if also his digestion?
Methinks at meals some odd thoughts
might intrude,
And conscience ask a curious sort of
question,
About the right divine how far we should
Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has
opprest one,
I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

XXXI

Voltaire says 'No'; he tells you that
Candide
Found life most tolerable after meals;
He's wrong—unless man were a pig, in-
deed,
Repletion rather adds to what he feels,
Unless he's drunk, and then no doubt he's
freed
From his own brain's oppression while
it reels.
Of food I think with Philip's son, or rather
Ammon's (ill pleased with one world and
one father);

XXXII

I think with Alexander, that the act
Of eating, with another act or two,
Makes us feel our mortality in fact
Redoubled; when a roast and a ragout,
And fish, and soup, by some side dishes
back'd,
Can give us either pain or pleasure, who
Would pique himself on intellects, whose
use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice?

XXXIII

The other evening ('twas on Friday last)—
This is a fact, and no poetic fable—
Just as my great coat was about me cast,
My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
I heard a shot—'twas eight o'clock scarce
past—
And, running out as fast as I was able,
I found the military commandant
Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to
pant.

XXXIV

Poor fellow! for some reason, surely bad,
They had slain him with five slugs; and
left him there
To perish on the pavement: so I had
Him borne into the house and up the stair,
And stripp'd, and look'd to,—But why
should I add
More circumstances? vain was every
care;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

XXXV

I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
 And though I have seen many corpses,
 never
 Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
 So calm; though pierced through
 stomach, heart, and liver,
 He seem'd to sleep,—for you could
 scarcely tell
 (As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
 Of gore divulged the cause) that he was
 dead:
 So as I gazed on him, I thought or said—

XXXVI

'Can this be death? then what is life or
 death?
 Speak!' but he spoke not: 'wake!' but
 still he slept:—
 'But yesterday, and who had mightier
 breath?
 A thousand warriors by his word were
 kept
 In awe: he said, as the centurion saith,
 "Go," and he goeth; "come," and forth
 he stepp'd.
 The trump and bugle till he spake were
 dumb—
 And now nought left him but the muffled
 drum.'

XXXVII

And they who waited once and wor-
 shipp'd—they
 With their rough faces throng'd about
 the bed
 To gaze once more on the commanding
 clay
 Which for the last, though not the first,
 time bled;
 And such an end! that he who many a day
 Had faced Napoleon's foes until they
 fled,—
 The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
 Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

XXXVIII

The scars of his old wounds were near his
 new,
 Those honourable scars which brought
 him fame;
 And horrid was the contrast to the
 view—
 But let me quit the theme; as such things
 claim
 Perhaps even more attention than is due
 From me: I gazed (as oft I have gazed
 the same)
 To try if I could wrench aught out of death
 Which should confirm, or shake, or make
 a faith;

XXXIX

But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
 And there we go:—but *where?* five bits
 of lead,
 Or three, or two, or one, send very far!
 And is this blood, then, form'd but to
 be shed?
 Can every element our elements mar?
 And air—earth—water—fire live—and
 we dead?
 We, whose minds comprehend all things.
 No more;
 But let us to the story as before.

XL

The purchaser of Juan and acquaintance
 Bore off his bargains to a gilded boat,
 Embark'd himself and them, and off they
 went thence
 As fast as oars could pull and water float;
 They look'd like persons being led to sen-
 tence,
 Wond'ring what next, till the catque was
 brought
 Up in a little creek below a wall
 O'ertopp'd with cypresses, dark-green and
 tall.

XLI

Here their conductor tapping at the wicket
 Of a small iron door, 'twas open'd, and
 He led them onward, first through a low
 thicket
 Flank'd by large groves, which tower'd
 on either hand:
 They almost lost their way, and had to
 pick it—
 For night was closing ere they came to
 land.
 The eunuch made a sign to those on board,
 Who row'd off, leaving them without a word.

XLII

As they were plodding on their winding way
 Through orange bowers, and jasmine,
 and so forth:
 (Of which I might have a good deal to say,
 There being no such profusion in the
 North
 Of oriental plants, 'et cetera,'
 But that of late your scribblers think it
 worth
 Their while to rear whole hotbeds in *their*
 works,
 Because one poet travell'd 'mongst the
 Turks:)

XLIII

As they were threading on their way,
 there came
 Into Don Juan's head a thought, which he
 Whisper'd to his companion:—'twas the
 same
 Which might have then occur'd to you
 or me.

'Methinks,'—said he,—'it would be no great shame

If we should strike a stroke to set us free;
Let's knock that old black fellow on the head,
And march away—'twere easier done than said.'

XLIV

'Yes,' said the other, 'and when done, what then?

How get out? how the devil got we in?
And when we once were fairly out, and when

From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin,
To-morrow'd see us in some other den,
And worse off than we hitherto have been;
Besides, I'm hungry, and just now would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright a beef-steak.

XLV

'We must be near some place of man's abode;—

For the old negro's confidence in creeping,
With his two captives, by so queer a road,
Shows that he thinks his friends have not been sleeping;

A single cry would bring them all abroad:
'Tis better therefore looking before leaping—

And there, you see, this turn has brought us through,
By Jove, a noble palace!—lighted too.'

XLVI

It was indeed a wide extensive building
Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front

There seem'd to be besprent a deal of gilding
And various hues, as is the Turkish wont,—

A gaudy taste, for they are little skill'd in
The arts of which these lands were once the font:

Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
New painted, or a pretty opera-scene.

XLVII

And nearer as they came, a genial savour
Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus,
Things which in hungry mortals' eyes find favour,

Made Juan in his harsh intentions pause,
And put himself upon his good behaviour:
His friend, too, adding a new saving clause,

Said, 'In Heaven's name let's get some supper now,
And then I'm with you, if you're for a row.'

XLVIII

Some talk of an appeal unto some passion,
Some to men's feelings, others to their reason;

The last of these was never much the fashion,

For reason thinks all reasoning out of season:

Some speakers whine, and others lay the lash on,

But more or less continue still to tease on,

With arguments according to their 'forte';
But no one ever dreams of being short.—

XLIX

But I digress: of all appeals,—although
I grant the power of pathos, and of gold,
Of beauty, flattery, threats, a shilling,—no
Method's more sure at moments to take hold

Of the best feelings of mankind, which grow
More tender, as we every day behold,
Than that all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul—the dinner-bell.

L

Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine;

And Juan and his friend, albeit they heard

No Christian knoll to table, saw no line
Of lackeys usher to the feast prepared,
Yet smelt roast-meat, beheld a huge fire shine,

And cooks in motion with their clean arms bared,

And gazed around them to the left and right,

With the prophetic eye of appetite.

LI

And giving up all notions of resistance,
They follow'd close behind their sable guide,

Who little thought that his own crack'd existence
Was on the point of being set aside:

He motion'd them to stop at some small distance,
And knocking at the gate, 'twas open'd wide,

And a magnificent large hall display'd
The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

LII

I won't describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days

His wondrous journey to some foreign court,

And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise—

DON JUAN

[CANTO V

Death to his publisher, to him 'tis sport;
While Nature, tortured twenty thou
sand ways,
Resigns herself with exemplary patience
To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches,
illustrations.

LIII

Along this hall, and up and down, some,
squatted
Upon their hams, were occupied at
chess;
Others in monosyllable talk chatted,
And some seem'd much in love with
their own dress;
And divers smoked superb pipes,
decorated
With amber mouths of greater price or
less;
And several strutted, others slept, and
some
Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.

LIV

As the black eunuch enter'd with his
brace
Of purchased Infidels, some raised
their eyes
A moment, without slackening from their
pace;
But those who sate, ne'er stirr'd in any
wise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
Just as one views a horse to guess his
price;
Some nodded to the negro from their
station,
But no one troubled him with conversa-
tion.

LV

He leads them through the hall, and, with-
out stopping,
On through a farther range of goodly
rooms,
Splendid but silent, save in *one*, where,
dropping,
A marble fountain echoes through the
glooms
Of night, which robe the chamber, or
where popping
Some female head most curiously
presumes
To thrust its black eyes through the door
or lattice,
As wondering what the *devil* noise that is.

LVI

Some faint lamps gleaming from the lofty
walls
Gave light enough to hint their farther
way,
But not enough to show the imperial halls
In all the flashing of their full array;

Perhaps there's nothing—I'll not say
appals,
But saddens more by night as well as
day,
Than an enormous room without a soul
To break the lifeless splendour of the
whole.

LVII

Two or three seem so little, *one* seems
nothing:
In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the
shore,
There solitude, we know, has her full
growth in
The spots which were her realms for
evermore;
But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in
More modern buildings and those built
of yore,
A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
Seeing what's meant for many with but
one.

LVIII

A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite,
Are things which make an English
evening pass;
Though *certainly* by no means so grand a
sight
As is a theatre lit up by gas.
I pass my evenings in long galleries solely,
And that's the reason I'm so melancholy.

LIX

Alas! man makes that great which makes
him little:
I grant you in a church 'tis very well:
What speaks of heaven should by no
means be brittle,
But strong and lasting, till no tongue
can tell
Their names who rear'd it; but huge
houses fit ill—
And huge tombs worse—mankind,
since Adam fell.
Methinks the story of the tower of Babel
Might teach them this much better than
I'm able.

LX

Babel was Nimrod's hunting-box, and then
A town of gardens, walls, and wealth
amazing,
Where Nebuchadonozor, king of men,
Reign'd, till one summer's day he took
to grazing,
And Daniel tamed the lions in their den,
The people's awe and admiration raising:
'Twas famous, too, for Thisbe and for
Pyramus,
And the calumniated queen Semiramis.—

LXI

That injured Queen, by chroniclers so
coarse,
Has been accused (I doubt not by
conspiracy)
Of an improper friendship for her horse
(Love, like religion, sometimes runs to
heresy):
This monstrous tale had probably its source
(For such exaggerations here and there
I see)
In writing 'Courser' by mistake for 'Cou-
rier';
I wish the case would come before a jury
here.

LXII

But to resume,—should there be (what may
not
Be in these days?) some infidels, who
don't,
Because they can't, find out the very spot
Of that same Babel, or because they won't
(Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some
bricks has got,
And written lately two memoirs upon 't)
Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
Must be believed, though they believe not
you,

LXIII

Yet let them think that Horace has exprest
Shortly and sweetly the masonic folly
Of those, forgetting the great place of rest,
Who give themselves to architecture
wholly;
We know where things and men must end
at best:
A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
And 'Et sepulchri immemor struis domos'
Shows that we build when we should but
entomb us.

LXIV

At last they reach'd a quarter most retired,
Where echo woke as if from a long
slumber;
Though full of all things which could be
desired,
One wonder'd what to do with such a
number
Of articles which nobody required;
Here wealth had done its utmost to en-
cumber
With furniture an exquisite apartment,
Which puzzled Nature much to know what
Art meant.

LXV

It seem'd, however, but to open on
A range or suite of further chambers,
which
Might lead to heaven knows where; but in
this one
The moveables were prodigally rich:

Sofas 'twas half a sin to sit upon,
So costly were they; carpets every stitch
Of workmanship so rare, they made you
wish
You could glide o'er them like a golden
fish.

LXVI

The black, however, without hardly deign-
ing
A glance at that which wrapt the slaves
in wonder,
Trampled what they scarce trod for fear
of staining,
As if the milky way their feet was under
With all its stars; and with a stretch attain-
ing
A certain press or cupboard niched in
yonder,
In that remote recess which you may see . . .
Or if you don't the fault is not in me,—

LXVII

I wish to be perspicuous; and the black,
I say, unlocking the recess, pull'd forth
A quantity of clothes fit for the back
Of any Mussulman, whate'er his worth;
And of variety there was no lack—
And yet, though I have said there was
no dearth,—
He chose himself to point out what he
thought
Most proper for the Christians he had
bought.

LXVIII

The suit he thought most suitable to each
Was, for the elder and the stouter, first
A Candiot cloak, which to the knee
might reach,
And trousers not so tight that they
would burst,
But such as fit an Asiatic breech;
A shawl, whose folds in Cashmere had
been nurst,
Slippers of saffron, dagger rich and handy;
In short, all things which form a Turkish
dandy.

LXIX

While he was dressing, Baba, their black
friend,
Hinted the vast advantages which they
Might probably obtain both in the end,
If they would but pursue the proper
way
Which Fortune plainly seem'd to re-
commend;
And then he added, that he needs must
say,
"Twould greatly tend to better their con-
dition,
If they would condescend to circumcision.

LXX

'For his own part, he really should rejoice
To see them true believers, but no less
Would leave his proposition to their
choice.'

The other, thanking him for this excess
Of goodness, in thus leaving them a voice
In such a trifle, scarcely could express
'Sufficiently' (he said) 'his approbation
Of all the customs of this polish'd nation.'

LXXI

'For his own share—he saw but small
objection

To so respectable an ancient rite;
And, after swallowing down a slight
reflection,
For which he own'd a present appetite,
He doubted not a few hours of reflection
Would reconcile him to the business
quite.'

'Will it?' said Juan, sharply: 'Strike me
dead,
But they as soon shall circumcise my head!

LXXII

'Cut off a thousand heads, before——'—
'Now, pray,'

Replied the other, 'do not interrupt:
You put me out in what I had to say.

Sir!—as I said, as soon as I have supped,
I shall perpend if your proposal may
Be such as I can properly accept;
Provided always your great goodness still
Remits the matter to our own free-will.'

LXXIII

Baba eyed Juan, and said, 'Be so good
As dress yourself—' and pointed out a
suit

In which a Princess with great pleasure
would

Array her limbs; but Juan standing mute,
As not being in a masquerading mood,
Gave it a slight kick with his Christian
foot;

And when the old negro told him to 'Get
ready,'
Replied, 'Old gentleman, I'm not a lady.'

LXXIV

'What you may be, I neither know nor
care.'

Said Baba; 'but pray do as I desire:
I have no more time nor many words to
spare.'

'At least,' said Juan, 'sure I may inquire
The cause of this odd travesty?'—'For-
bear.'

Said Baba, 'to be curious; 'twill
transpire,
No doubt, in proper place, and time, and
season:
I have no authority to tell the reason.'

LXXV

'Then if I do,' said Juan, 'I'll be——'—
'Hold!'

Rejoin'd the negro, 'pray be not pro-
voking;

This spirit's well, but it may wax too bold,
And you will find us not too fond of
joking.'

'What, sir,' said Juan, 'shall it e'er be told
That I unsex'd my dress?' But Baba,
stroking

The things down, said, 'Incense me, and I
call

Those who will leave you of no sex at all.

LXXVI

'I offer you a handsome suit of clothes:
A woman's, true; but then there is a
cause

Why you should wear them.'—'What,
though my soul loathes

The effeminate garb?'—thus, after a
short pause,

Sigh'd Juan, muttering also some slight
oaths,

'What the devil shall I do with all this
gauze?'

Thus he profanely term'd the finest lace
Which e'er set off a marriage-morning face.

LXXVII

And then he swore; and, sighing, on he
slipp'd

A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk;
Next with a virgin zone he was equip'd,
Which girt a slight chemise as white as
milk;

But tugging on his petticoat, he tripp'd,
Which—as we say—or as the Scotch

say, *whilk*,
(The rhyme obliges me to this; sometimes
Monarchs are less imperative than
rhymes)—

LXXVIII

Whilk, which (or what you please), was
owing to

His garment's nov-ity, and his being
awkward:

And yet at last he managed to get through
His toilet, though no doubt a little back-
ward:

The negro Baba help'd a little too,
When some untoward part of raiment

stuck hard;
And, wrestling both his arms into a gown,
He paused, and took a survey up and down.

LXXIX

One difficulty still remain'd—his hair
Was hardly long enough; but Baba found

So many false long tresses all to spare,
That soon his head was most completely
crown'd,

After the manner then in fashion there;
 And this addition with such gems was
 bound
 As suited the *ensemble* of his toilet,
 While Baba made him comb his head and
 oil it.

LXXX

And now being femininely all array'd,
 With some small aid from scissors,
 paint, and tweezers,
 He look'd in almost all respects a maid,
 And Baba smilingly exclaim'd, 'You
 see, sirs,
 A perfect transformation here display'd;
 And now, then, you must come along
 with me, sirs,
 That is—the Lady:' clapping his hands
 twice,
 Four blacks were at his elbow in a trice.

LXXXI

'You, sir,' said Baba, nodding to the one,
 'Will please to accompany those gentle-
 men
 To supper; but you, worthy Christian nun,
 Will follow me: no trifling, sir; for
 when
 I say a thing, it must at once be done.
 What fear you? think you this a lion's
 den?
 Why, 'tis a palace; where the truly wise
 Anticipate the Prophet's paradise.

LXXXII

'You fool! I tell you no one means you
 harm.'
 'So much the better,' Juan said, 'for
 them;
 Else they shall feel the weight of this my
 arm,
 Which is not quite so light as you may
 deem.
 I yield thus far; but soon will break the
 charm,
 If any take me for that which I seem:
 So that I trust for everybody's sake,
 That this disguise may lead to no mistake.'

LXXXIII

'Blockhead! come on, and see,' quoth
 Baba; while
 Don Juan, turning to his comrade, who
 Though somewhat grieved, could scarce
 forbear a smile
 Upon the metamorphosis in view,—
 'Farewell!' they mutually exclaim'd: 'this
 soil
 Seems fertile in adventures strange and
 new;
 One's turn'd half Mussulman, and one a
 maid,
 By this old black enchanter's unsought
 aid.'

LXXXIV

'Farewell!' said Juan: 'should we meet
 no more,
 I wish you a good appetite.'—'Farewell!'
 Replied the other; 'though it grieves me
 sore:
 When we next meet, we'll have a tale to
 tell:
 We needs must follow when Fate puts
 from shore.
 Keep your good name; though Eve
 herself once fell.'
 'Nay,' quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self
 shan't carry me,
 Unless his highness promises to marry me.'

LXXXV

And thus they parted, each by separate
 doors;
 Baba led Juan onward room by room
 Through glittering galleries, and o'er
 marble floors,
 Till a gigantic portal through the gloom,
 Haughty and huge, along the distance
 lowers;
 And wafted far arose a rich perfume:
 It seem'd as though they came upon a
 shrine,
 For all was vast, still, fragrant, and divine.

LXXXVI

The giant door was broad, and bright,
 and high,
 Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious
 guise;
 Warriors thereon were battling furiously;
 Here stalks the victor, there the van-
 quish'd lies;
 There captives led in triumph droop the eye,
 And in perspective many a squadron flies:
 It seems the work of times before the line
 Of Rome transplanted fell with Con-
 stantine.

LXXXVII

This massy portal stood at the wide close
 Of a huge hall, and on its either side
 Two little dwarfs, the least you could
 suppose,
 Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
 In mockery to the enormous gate which
 rose
 O'er them in almost pyramidal pride:
 The gate so splendid was in all its *features*,
 You never thought about those little
 creatures,

LXXXVIII

Until you nearly trod on them, and then
 You started back in horror to survey
 The wondrous hideousness of those small
 men,
 Whose colour was not black, nor white,
 nor grey,

DON JUAN

[CANTO V

But an extraneous mixture, which no pen
Can trace, although perhaps the pencil
may;
They were mis-shapen pigmies, deaf and
dumb,—
Monsters, who cost a no less monstrous
sum.

LXXXIX

Their duty was—for they were strong, and
though
They look'd so little, did strong things
at times—
To open this door, which they could really do,
The hinges being as smooth as Rogers'
rhymes;
And now and then, with tough strings of
the bow,
As is the custom of those Eastern climes,
To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;
For mutes are generally used for that.

XC

They spoke by signs—that is, not spoke
at all;
And looking like two incubi, they glared
As Baba with his fingers made them fall
To heaving back the portal folds: it
scared
Juan a moment, as this pair so small,
With shrinking serpent optics on him
stared;
It was as if their little looks could poison
Or fascinate whome'er they fix'd their eyes
on.

XCI

Before they enter'd, Baba paused to hint
To Juan some slight lessons as his guide:
'If you could just contrive,' he said, 'to
stint
That somewhat manly majesty of stride,
'Twould be as well, and—(though there's
not much in't),
To swing a little less from side to side,
Which has at times an aspect of the
oddest:—
And also could you look a little modest,

XCII

"Twould be convenient; for these mutes
have eyes
Like needles, which may pierce those
petticoats;
And if they should discover your disguise,
You know how near us the deep
Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance, ere morning
rise,
To find our way to Marmora without
boats,
Stitch'd up in sacks—a mode of navigation
A good deal practised here upon
occasion.'

XCIII

With this encouragement, he led the way
Into a room still nobler than the last;
A rich confusion form'd a disarray
In such sort, that the eye along it cast
Could hardly carry anything away,
Object on object flash'd so bright and
fast;
A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and
glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter.

XCIV

Wealth had done wonders—taste not
much; such things
Occur in Orient palaces, and even
In the more chasten'd domes of Western
kings
(Of which I have also seen some six or
seven),
Where I can't say or gold or diamond
flings
Great lustre, there is much to be for-
given;
Groups of bad statues, tables, chairs, and
pictures,
On which I cannot pause to make my
strictures.

XCV

In this imperial hall, at distance lay
Under a canopy, and there reclined
Quite in a confidential queenly way,
A lady; Baba stopp'd, and kneeling
sign'd
To Juan, who, though not much used to
pray,
Knelt down by instinct, wondering in
his mind
What all this meant: while Baba bow'd
and bended
His head, until the ceremony ended.

XCVI

The lady rising up with such an air
As Venus rose with from the wave, on
them
Bent like an antelope a Paphian pair
Of eyes, which put out each surround-
ing gem;
And raising up an arm as moonlight fair,
She sign'd to Baba, who first kiss'd the
hem
Of her deep purple robe, and speaking
low,
Pointed to Juan, who remain'd below.

XCVII

Her presence was as lofty as her state;
Her beauty of that overpowering kind,
Whose force description only would
abate:
I'd rather leave it much to your own
mind,

Than lessen it by what I could relate
Of forms and features; it would strike
you blind
Could I do justice to the full detail;
So, luckily for both, my phrases fail.

XCVIII

Thus much however I may add,—her years
Were ripe, they might make six-and-
twenty springs,
But there are forms which Time to touch
forbears,
And turns aside his scythe to vulgar
things:

Such as was Mary's Queen of Scots; true—
tears
And love destroy; and sapping sorrow
wings
Charms from the charmer, yet some
never grow
Ugly; for instance—Ninon de l'Enclos.

XCIX

She spake some words to her attendants,
who
Composed a choir of girls, ten or a
dozen,
And were all clad alike; like Juan, too,
Who wore their uniform, by Baba
chosen:
They form'd a very nymph-like looking
crew,
Which might have called Diana's
chorus 'cousin,'
As far as outward show may correspond;
I won't be bail for anything beyond.

C

They bow'd obeisance and withdrew,
retiring,
But not by the same door through
which came in
Baba and Juan, which last stood admiring.
At some small distance, all he saw within
This strange saloon, much fitted for
inspiring
Marvel and praise; for both or none
things win;
And I must say, I ne'er could see the very
Great happiness of the 'Nil Admirari.'

CI

'Not to admire is all the art I know
(Plain truth, dear Murray, needs few
flowers of speech)
To make men happy, or to keep them so'
(So take it in the very words of Creech)—
Thus Horace wrote we all know long ago;
And thus Pope quotes the precept to
re-teach
From his translation; but had *none*
admired,
Would Pope have sung, or Horace been
inspired?

CII

Baba, when all the damsels were with-
drawn,
Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then
A second time desired him to kneel down,
And kiss the lady's foot; which maxim
when
He heard repeated, Juan with a frown
Drew himself up to his full height again,
And said, 'It grieved him, but he could
not stoop
To any shoe, unless it shod the Pope.'

CIII

Baba, indignant at this ill-timed pride,
Made fierce remonstrances, and then
a threat
He mutter'd (but the last was given aside)
About a bow-string—quite in vain;
not yet
Would Juan bend, though 'twere to
Mahomet's bride:
There's nothing in the world like
etiquette
In kingly chambers or imperial halls,
As also at the race and county balls.

CIV

He stood like Atlas, with a world of words
About his ears, and nathless would not
bend;
The blood of all his line's Castilian lords
Boil'd in his veins, and rather than
descend
To stain his pedigree, a thousand swords
A thousand times of him had made an
end;
At length perceiving the '*foot*' could not
stand,
Baba proposed that he should kiss the
hand.

CV

Here was an honourable compromise,
A half-way house of diplomatic rest,
Where they might meet in much more
peaceful guise;
And Juan now his willingness exprest
To use all fit and proper courtesies,
Adding, that this was commonest and
best,
For through the South, the custom still
commands
The gentleman to kiss the lady's hands.

CVI

And he advanced, though with but a bad
grace,
Though on more *thorough-bred* or
fairer fingers
No lips e'er left their transitory trace:
On such as these the lip too fondly
lingers,

DON JUAN

[CANTO V

And for one kiss would fain imprint a
brace,
As you will see, if she you love shall
bring hers
In contact; and sometimes even a fair
stranger's
An almost twelvemonth's constancy en-
dangers.

CVII

The lady eyed him o'er and o'er, and bade
Baba retire, which he obey'd in style,
As if well used to the retreating trade;
And taking hints in good part all the
while,
He whisper'd Juan not to be afraid,
And looking on him with a sort of smile,
Took leave, with such a face of satisfaction,
As good men wear who have done a
virtuous action.

CVIII

When he was gone, there was a sudden
change:
I know not what might be the lady's
thought,
But o'er her bright brow flash'd a tumult
strange,
And into her clear cheek the blood was
brought,
Blood-red as sunset summer clouds which
range
The verge of Heaven; and in her large
eyes wrought,
A mixture of sensations might be scann'd,
Of half-voluptuousness and half-com-
mand.

CIX

Her form had all the softness of her sex,
Her features all the sweetness of the
devil,
When he put on the cherub to perplex
Eve, and paved (God knows how) the
road to evil;
The sun himself was scarce more free from
specks
Than she from aught at which the eye
could cavil;
Yet, somehow, there was something some-
where wanting,
As if she rather *order'd* than was *grant-
ing*.—

CX

Something imperial, or imperious, threw
A chain o'er all she did; that is, a chain
Was thrown as 'twere about the neck of
you,—
And rapture's self will seem almost a pain
With aught which looks like despotism in
view;
Our souls at least are free, and 'tis in
vain

We would against them make the flesh
obey—
The spirit in the end will have its way.

CXI

Her very smile was haughty, though so
sweet;
Her very nod was not an inclination:
There was a self-will even in her small feet,
As though they were quite conscious of
her station—
They trod as upon necks; and to complete
Her state (it is the custom of her nation),
A poniard deck'd her girdle, as the sign
She was a sultan's bride (thank Heaven,
not mine!)

CXII

'To hear and to obey' had been from birth
The law of all around her; to fulfil
All phantasies which yielded joy or mirth,
Had been her slaves' chief pleasure, as
her will;
Her blood was high, her beauty scarce of
earth:
Judge, then, if her caprices e'er stood still;
Had she but been a Christian, I've a notion
We should have found out the 'perpetual
motion.'

CXIII

Whate'er she saw and coveted was
brought;
Whate'er she did *not* see, if she supposed
It might be seen, with diligence was sought,
And when 'twas found straightway the
bargain closed:
There was no end unto the things she
bought,
Nor to the trouble which her fancies
caused;
Yet even her tyranny had such a grace,
The women pardon'd all except her face.

CXIV

Juan, the latest of her whims, had caught
Her eye in passing on his way to sale;
She order'd him directly to be bought,
And Baba, who had ne'er been known
to fail
In any kind of mischief to be wrought,
At all such auctions knew how to
prevail:
She had no prudence, but he had; and this
Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

CXV

His youth and features favour'd the
disguise,
And should you ask how she, a sultan's
bride,
Could risk or compass such strange
phantasies,
This I must leave sultanas to decide:

Emperors are only husbands in wives' eyes,
 And kings and consorts oft are mystified,
 As we may ascertain with due precision,
 Some by experience, others by tradition.

CXVI

But to the main point, where we have been tending:—
 She now conceived all difficulties past,
 And deem'd herself extremely con-
 descending
 When, being made her property at last,
 Without more preface, in her blue eyes
 blending
 Passion and power, a glance on him she
 cast,
 And merely saying, 'Christian, canst thou
 love?'
 Conceived that phrase was quite enough
 to move.

CXVII

And so it was, in proper time and place;
 But Juan, who had still his mind o'er-
 flowing
 With Haidée's isle and soft Ionian face,
 Felt the warm blood, which in his face
 was glowing,
 Rush back upon his heart, which fill'd
 apace,
 And left his cheeks as pale as snow-
 drops blowing:
 These words went through his soul like
 Arab spears,
 So that he spoke not, but burst into tears.

CXVIII

She was a good deal shock'd; not shock'd
 at tears,
 For women shed and use them at their
 liking;
 But there is something when man's eye
 appears
 Wet, still more disagreeable and strik-
 ing:
 A woman's tear-drop melts, a man's half
 sears,
 Like molten lead, as if you thrust a pike
 in
 His heart to force it out, for (to be shorter)
 To them 'tis a relief, to us a torture.

CXIX

And she would have consoled, but knew
 not how:
 Having no equals, nothing which had
 e'er
 Infected her with sympathy till now,
 And never having dreamt what 'twas
 to bear

Aught of a serious, sorrowing kind,
 although
 There might arise some pouting petty
 care
 To cross her brow, she wonder'd how so
 near
 Her eyes another's eye could shed a tear.

CXX

But nature teaches more than power can
 spoil,
 And, when a *strong* although a strange
 sensation
 Moves—female hearts are such a genial
 soil
 For kinder feelings, whatsoe'er their
 nation,
 They naturally pour the 'wine and oil,'
 Samaritans in every situation;
 And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not
 why,
 Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye.

CXXI

But tears must stop like all things else;
 and soon
 Juan, who for an instant had been
 moved
 To such a sorrow by the intrusive tone
 Of one who dared to ask if 'he *had*
 loved,'
 Call'd back the stoic to his eyes, which
 shone
 Bright with the very weakness he re-
 proved;
 And although sensitive to beauty, he
 Felt most indignant still at not being free.

CXXII

Gulbeyaz, for the first time in her days,
 Was much embarrass'd, never having
 met
 In all her life with aught save prayers and
 praise;
 And as she also risk'd her life to get
 Him whom she meant to tutor in love's
 ways,
 Into a comfortable tête-à-tête,
 To lose the hour would make her quite a
 martyr,
 And they had wasted now almost a
 quarter.

CXXIII

I also would suggest the fitting time,
 To gentlemen in any such like case,
 That is to say—in a meridian clime,
 With us there is more law given to the
 chase,
 But here a small delay forms a great crime:
 So recollect that the extremest grace
 Is just two minutes for your declaration—
 A moment more would hurt your
 reputation.

DON JUAN

[CANTO V

CCXIV

Juan's was good; and might have been
still better,

But he had got Haidée into his head:
However strange, he could not yet forget
her,
Which made him seem exceedingly ill-
bred.

Gulbeyaz, who look'd on him as her debtor
For having had him to her palace led,
Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
Grow deadly pale, and then blush back
again.

CCXV

At length, in an imperial way, she laid
Her hand on his, and bending on him
eyes,
Which needed not an empire to persuade,
Look'd into his for love, where none
replies:

Her brow grew black, but she would not
upbraid,
That being the last thing a proud
woman tries;
She rose, and pausing one chaste moment,
threw
Herself upon his breast, and there she grew.

CCXVI

This was an awkward test, as Juan found,
But he was steel'd by sorrow, wrath,
and pride:

With gentle force her white arms he
unwound,

And seated her all drooping by his side,
Then rising haughtily he glanced around,

And looking coldly in her face, he cried,
'The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor I
Serve a sultana's sensual phantasy.

CCXVII

'Thou ask'st, if I can love? be this the
proof

How much I *have* loved—that I love
not *thee*!

In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,
Were fitter for me: Love is for the free!
I am not dazzled by this splendid roof;
Whate'er thy power, and great it seems
to be,

Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch
around a throne,

And hands obey—our hearts are still our
own.'

CCXVIII

This was a truth to us extremely trite;
Not so to her, who ne'er had heard such
things:

She deem'd her least command must
yield delight,

Earth being only made for queens and
kings.

If hearts lay on the left side or the right
She hardly knew, to such perfection
brings

Legitimacy its born votaries, when
Aware of their due royal rights o'er men.

CCXIX

Besides, as has been said, she was so fair
As even in a much humbler lot had
made

A kingdom or confusion anywhere,
And also, as may be presumed, she laid
Some stress on charms, which seldom are,
if e'er,

By their possessors thrown into the
shade:

She thought hers gave a double 'right
divine';

And half of that opinion's also mine.

CCXX

Remember, or (if you can not) imagine,
Ye! who have kept your chastity when
young,

While some more desperate dowager has
been waging

Love with you, and been in the dog-
days stung

By your refusal, recollect her raging!
Or recollect all that was said or sung

On such a subject; then suppose the
face

Of a young downright beauty in this
case.

CCXXI

Suppose,—but you already have sup-
posed,

The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady
Booby,

Phædra, and all which story has disclosed
Of good examples; pity that so few by

Poets and private tutors are exposed,
To educate—ye youth of Europe—
you by!

But when you have supposed the few we
know,

You can't suppose Gulbeyaz' angry brow.

CCXXII

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
Or any interesting beast of prey,

Are smiles at hand for the distress
Of ladies who cannot have their own
way;

But though my turn will not be served
with less,

These don't express one half what I
should say:

For what is stealing young ones, few or
many,

To cutting short their hopes of having
any?

CXXXIII

The love of offspring's nature's general law,
 From tigresses and cubs to ducks and ducklings;
 There's nothing whets the beak, or arms the claw,
 Like an invasion of their babes and sucklings;
 And all who have seen a human nursery, saw
 How mothers love their children's squalls and chucklings:
 This strong extreme effect (to tire no longer
 Your patience) shows the cause must still be stronger.

CXXXIV

If I said fire flash'd from Gulbeyaz' eyes,
 'Twere nothing—for her eyes flash'd always fire;
 Or said her cheeks assumed the deepest dyes,
 I should but bring disgrace upon the dyer,
 So supernatural was her passion's rise;
 For ne'er till now she knew a check'd desire:
 Even ye who know what a check'd woman is
 (Enough, God knows!) would much fall short of this.

CXXXV

Her rage was but a minute's, and 'twas well—
 A moment's more had slain her; but the while
 It lasted 'twas like a short glimpse of hell:
 Nought's more sublime than energetic bile,
 Though horrible to see, yet grand to tell,
 Like ocean warring 'gainst a rocky isle;
 And the deep passions flashing through her form
 Made her a beautiful embodied storm.

CXXXVI

A vulgar tempest 'twere to a typhoon
 To match a common fury with her rage,
 And yet she did not want to reach the moon,
 Like moderate Hotspur on the immortal page;
 Her anger pitch'd into a lower tune,
 Perhaps the fault of her soft sex and age—
 Her wish was but to 'kill, kill, kill,' like Lear's,
 And then her thirst of blood was quenched in tears.

CXXXVII

A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,
 Pass'd without words—in fact she could not speak;
 And then her sex's shame broke in at last,
 A sentiment till then in her but weak,
 But now it flow'd in natural and fast,
 As water through an unexpected leak;
 For she felt humbled—and humiliation
 Is sometimes good for people in her station.

CXXXVIII

It teaches them that they are flesh and blood
 It also gently hints to them that others,
 Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud;
 That urns and pipkins are but fragile brothers,
 And works of the same pottery, bad or good,
 Though not all born of the same sires and mothers;
 It teaches—Heaven knows only what it teaches,
 But sometimes it may mend, and often reaches.

CXXXIX

Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head;
 Her second, to cut only his—acquaintance;
 Her third, to ask him where he had been bred;
 Her fourth, to rally him into repentance;
 Her fifth, to call her maids and go to bed;
 Her sixth, to stab herself; her seventh, to sentence
 The lash to Baba:—but her grand resource
 Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

CXL

She thought to stab herself, but then she had
 The dagger close at hand, which made it awkward;
 For Eastern stays are little made to pad,
 So that a poniard pierces if 'tis stuck hard:
 She thought of killing Juan—but, poor lad!
 Though he deserved it well for being so backward,
 The cutting off his head was not the art
 Most likely to attain her aim—his heart.

CXLI

Juan was moved: he had made up his mind
 To be impaled, or quarter'd as a dish
 For dogs, or to be slain with pangs refined,
 Or thrown to lions, or made baits for fish,

And thus heroically stood resign'd,
Rather than sin—except to his own
wish:
But all his great preparatives for dying
Dissolved like snow before a woman
crying.

CXLI

As through his palms Bob Acres' valour
oozed,
So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how;
And first he wonder'd why he had refused;
And then, if matters could be made up
now;
And next his savage virtue he accused,
Just as a friar may accuse his vow,
Or as a dame repents her of her oath,
Which mostly ends in some small breach
of both.

CXLI

So he began to stammer some excuses;
But words are not enough in such a
matter,
Although you borrow'd all that e'er the
muses
Have sung, or even a Dandy's dandiest
chatter,
Or all the figures Castlereagh abuses;
Just as a languid smile began to flatter
His peace was making, but before he
ventured
Further, old Baba rather briskly enter'd.

CXLI

'Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the
Moon!
(Twas thus he spake,) 'and Empress of
the Earth!
Whose frown would put the spheres all
out of tune,
Whose smile makes all the planets
dance with mirth,
Your slave brings tidings—he hopes not
too soon—
Which your sublime attention may be
worth:
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray,
To hint that he is coming up this way.'

CXLI

'Is it,' exclaim'd Gulbeyaz, 'as you say?
I wish to heaven he would not shine till
morning!
But bid my women form the Milky-way.
Hence, my old comet! give the stars due
warning—
And, Christian! mingle with them as you
may,
And as you'd have me pardon your past
scorning'—
Here they were interrupted by a humming
Sound, and then by a cry, 'The Sultan's
coming!'

CXLI

First came her damsels, a decorous file,
And then his Highness' eunuchs, black
and white;
The train might reach a quarter of a mile:
His majesty was always so polite
As to announce his visits a long while
Before he came, especially at night;
For being the last wife of the Emperor,
She was of course the favourite of the four.

His Highness was a man of solemn port,
Shawl'd to the nose, and bearded to the
eyes,
Snatch'd from a prison to preside at court,
His lately bowstrung brother caused
his rise;
He was as good a sovereign of the sort
As any mentioned in the histories
Of Cantemir, or Knöllës, where few shine
Save Solyman, the glory of their line.

He went to mosque in state, and said his
prayers
With more than 'Oriental scrupulosity';
He left to his vizier all state affairs,
And show'd but little royal curiosity:
I know not if he had domestic cares—
No process proved connubial ani-
mosity;
Four wives and twice five hundred maids,
unseen,
Were ruled as calmly as a Christian queen.

CXLI

If now and then there happen'd a slight
slip,
Little was heard of criminal or crime;
The story scarcely pass'd a single lip—
The sack and sea had settled all in time,
From which the secret nobody could rip:
The public knew no more than does this
rhyme;
No scandals made 'he daily press a
curse—
Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

CL

He saw with his own eyes the moon was
round,
Was also certain that the earth was
square,
Because he had journey'd fifty miles, and
found
No sign that it was circular anywhere:
His empire also was without a bound:
'Tis true, a little troubled here and there,
By rebel pachas, and encroaching gjaours,
But then they never came to 'the Seven
Towers';

CLI

Except in shape of envoys, who were sent
To lodge there when a war broke out,
according
To the true law of nations, which ne'er
meant
Those scoundrels, who have never had
a sword in
Their dirty diplomatic hands, to vent
Their spleen in making strife, and
safely wording
Their lies, yclept despatches, without risk
or
The singeing of a single inky whisker.

CLII

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
Of whom all such as came of age were
stow'd,
The former in a palace, where like nuns
They lived till some Bashaw was sent
abroad,
When she, whose turn it was, was wed at
once,
Sometimes at six years old—though
this seems odd,
'Tis true; the reason is, that the Bashaw
Must make a present to his sire-in-law.

CLIII

His sons were kept in prison, till they grew
Of years to fill a bowstring or the throne,
One or the other, but which of the two
Could yet be known unto the fates alone;
Meantime the education they went
through
Was princely, as the proofs have always
shown;
So that the heir-apparent still was found
No less deserving to be hang'd than
crown'd.

His Majesty saluted his fourth spouse
With all the ceremonies of his rank,
Who clear'd her sparkling eyes and
smooth'd her brows,
As suits a matron who has play'd a
prank;
These must seem doubly mindful of their
vows,
To save the credit of their breaking bank:
To no men are such cordial greetings given
As those whose wives have made them fit
for heaven.

CLV

His Highness cast around his great black
eyes,
And looking, as he always look'd,
perceived
Juan amongst the damsels in disguise,
At which he seem'd no whit surprised
nor grieved,

But just remark'd with air sedate and wise,
While still a fluttering sigh Gulbeyaz
heaved,
'I see you've bought another girl; 'tis pity
That a mere Christian should be half so
pretty.'

CLVI

This compliment, which drew all eyes
upon
The new-bought virgin, made her blush
and shake.
Her comrades, also, thought themselves
undone:
Oh! Mahomet! that his Majesty should
take
Such notice of a giauour, while scarce to
one
Of them his lips imperial ever spake!
There was a general whisper, toss, and
wriggle,
But etiquette forbade them all to giggle.

CLVII

The Turks do well to shut—at least, some-
times—
The women up—because, in sad reality,
Their chastity in these unhappy climes
Is not a thing of that astringent quality
Which in the north prevents precocious
crimes,
And makes our snow less pure than our
morality;
The sun, which yearly melts the polar ice,
Has quite the contrary effect on vice.

CLVIII

Thus in the East they are extremely strict,
And wedlock and a padlock mean the
same:
Excepting only when the former's pick'd
It ne'er can be replaced in proper frame;
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick'd:
But then their own polygamy's to
blame;
Why don't they knead two virtuous souls
for life
Into that moral centaur, man and wife?

CLIX

Thus far our chronicle; and now we pause,
Though not for want of matter; but 'tis
time,
According to the ancient epic laws,
To slacken sail, and anchor with our
rhyme.
Let this fifth canto meet with due applause,
The sixth shall have a touch of the sub-
lime;
Meanwhile, as Homer sometimes sleeps,
perhaps
You'll pardon to my Muse a few short
naps.

PREFACE TO CANTOS VI, VII, AND VIII

THE details of the siege of Ismail in two of the following cantos (i.e. the seventh and eighth) are taken from a French Work, entitled 'Histoire de la Nouvelle Russie.' Some of the incidents attributed to Don Juan really occurred, particularly the circumstance of his saving the infant, which was the actual case of the late Duc de Richelieu, then a young volunteer in the Russian service, and afterward the founder and benefactor of Odessa, where his name and memory can never cease to be regarded with reverence.

In the course of these cantos, a stanza or two will be found relative to the late Marquis of Londonderry, but written some time before his decease. Had that person's oligarchy died with him, they would have been suppressed; as it is, I am aware of nothing in the manner of his death or of his life to prevent the free expression of the opinions of all whom his whole existence was consumed in endeavouring to enslave. That he was an amiable man in *private* life, may or may not be true; but with this the public have nothing to do; and as to lamenting his death, it will be time enough when Ireland has ceased to mourn for his birth. As a minister, I, for one of millions, looked upon him as the most despotic in intention, and the weakest in intellect, that ever tyrannised over a country. It is the first time indeed since the Normans that England has been insulted by a *minister* (at least) who could not speak English, and that parliament permitted itself to be dictated to in the language of Mrs. Malaprop.

Of the manner of his death little need be said, except that if a poor radical, such as Waddington or Watson, had cut his throat, he would have been buried in a cross-road, with the usual appurtenances of the stake and mallet. But the minister was an elegant lunatic—a sentimental suicide—he merely cut the 'carotid artery,' (blessings on their learning!) and lo! the pageant, and the Abbey! and 'the syllables of dolour yelled forth' by the newspapers—and the harangue of the Coroner in a eulogy over the bleeding body of the deceased—(an Anthony worthy of such a Cæsar)—and the nauseous and atrocious cant of a degraded crew of conspirators against all that is sincere and honourable. In his death he was necessarily one of two things by the *law**—a felon or a madman—and in either case no great subject for panegyric. In his life he was—what all the world knows, and half of it will feel for years to come, unless his death prove a 'moral lesson' to the surviving! Sejanus of Europe. It may at least serve as some consolation to the nations, that their oppressors are not happy, and in some instances judge so justly of their own actions as to anticipate the sentence of mankind.—Let us hear no more of this man; and let Ireland remove the ashes of her Grattan from the sanctuary of Westminster. Shall the patriot of humanity repose by the Werther of politics!!!

* I say by the *law* of the *land*—the laws of humanity judge more gently; but as the legitimates have always the *law* in their mouths, let them here make the most of it.

† From this number must be excepted Canning. Canning is a genius, almost a universal one, an orator, a wit, a poet, a statesman; and no man of talent can long pursue the path of his late predecessor, Lord C. If ever man saved his country, Canning *can*; but will he? I, for one, hope so.

With regard to the objections which have been made on another score to the already published cantos of this poem, I shall content myself with two quotations from Voltaire:—'La pudeur s'est enfuite des cœurs, et s'est réfugiée sur les lèvres.' 'Plus les mœurs sont dépravées, plus les expressions deviennent mesurées; on croit regagner en langage ce qu'on a perdu en vertu.'

This is the real fact, as applicable to the degraded and hypocritical mass which leavens the present English generation, and is the only answer they deserve. The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer—which, with Radical, Liberal, Jacobin, Reformer, &c., are the changes which the hirelings are daily ringing in the ears of those who will listen—should be welcome to all who recollect on whom it was originally bestowed. Socrates and Jesus Christ were put to death publicly as *blasphemers*, and so have been and may be many who dare to oppose the most notorious abuses of the name of God and the mind of man. But persecution is not refutation, nor even triumph: the 'wretched infidel,' as he is called, is probably happier in his prison than the proudest of his assailants. With his opinions I have nothing to do—they may be right or wrong—but he has suffered for them, and that very suffering for conscience' sake will make more proselytes to deism than the example of heterodox prelates to Christianity, suicide statesmen to oppression, or over-pensioned homicides to the impious alliance which insults the world with the name of 'Holy'! I have no wish to trample on the dishonoured or the dead; but it would be well if the adherents to the classes from whence those persons sprung should abate a little of the *cant* which is the crying sin of this double-dealing and false-speaking time of selfish spoliators, and—but enough for the present.

PISA, July, 1822.

CANTO THE SIXTH

'THERE is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood,'—you know
the rest,
And most of us have found it now and
then:
At least we think so, though but few
have guess'd
The moment, till too late to come again.
But no doubt everything is for the best—
Of which the surest sign is in the end:
When things are at the worst they some-
times mend.

There is a tide in the affairs of women,
Which, taken at the flood, leads—God
knows where:
Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a
hair.
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen
With its strange whirls and eddies can
compare:
Men with their heads reflect on this and
that—
But women with their hearts on heaven
knows what!

III

And yet a headlong, headstrong, down-
right she,
Young, beautiful, and daring—who
would risk
A throne, the world, the universe, to be
Beloved in her own way, and rather
whisk
The stars from out the sky, than not be
free
As are the billows when the breeze is
brisk—
Though such a she's a devil (if there be
one),
Yet she would make full many a Mani-
chean.

IV

Thrones, worlds, et cetera, are so oft up-
set
By commonest ambition, that when
passion
O'erthrows the same, we readily forget,
Or at the least forgive, the loving rash
one.
If Anthony be well remember'd yet,
'Tis not his conquests keep his name in
fashion,
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra's eyes,
Outbalances all Cæsar's victories.

V

He died at fifty for a queen of forty;
I wish their years had been fifteen and
twenty,
For then wealth, kingdoms, worlds are
but a sport—I
Remember when, though I had no great
plenty
Of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I
Gave what I had—a heart; as the world
went, I
Gave what was worth a world; for worlds
could never
Restore me those pure feelings, gone for
ever.

VI

'Twas the boy's 'mite,' and, like the
'widow's,' may
Perhaps be weigh'd hereafter, if not
now;
But whether such things do or do not
weigh,
All who have loved, or love, will still
allow
Life has nought like it. God is love, they
say,
And Love's a god, or was before the
brow
Of earth was wrinkled by the sins and
tears
Of—but Chronology best knows the
years.

VII

We left our hero and third heroine in
A kind of state more awkward than un-
common,
For gentlemen must sometimes risk their
skin
For that sad tempter, a forbidden
woman:
Sultans too much abhor this sort of sin,
And don't agree at all with the wise
Roman,
Heroic, stoic Cato, the sententious,
Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.

VIII

I know Gulbeyaz was extremely wrong;
I own it, I deplore it, I condemn it;
But I detest all fiction even in song,
And so must tell the truth, howe'er you
blame it.
Her reason being weak, her passions
strong,
She thought that her lord's heart (even
could she claim it)
Was scarce enough; for he had fifty-nine
Years, and a fifteen-hundredth con-
cubine.

IX

I am not, like Cassio, 'an arithmetician,'
But by the 'bookish theoric' it appears,
If 'tis summ'd up with feminine precision,
That, adding to the account his High-
ness' years,
The fair Sultana erred from inanition;
For, were the Sultan just to all his dears,
She could but claim the fifteen-hundredth
part
Of what should be monopoly—the heart.

X

It is observed that ladies are litigious
Upon all legal objects of possession,
And not the least so when they are
religious,
Which doubles what they think of the
transgression:
With suits and prosecutions they besiege
us,
As the tribunals show through many a
session,
When they suspect that any one goes
shares
In that to which the law makes them sole
heirs.

XI

Now, if this holds good in a Christian land,
The heathen also, though with lesser
latitude,
Are apt to carry things with a high hand,
And take, what kings call 'an imposing
attitude';

And for their rights connubial make a
stand,

When their liege husbands treat them
with ingratitude;
And as four wives must have quadruple
claims,
The Tigris hath its jealousies like Thames.

XII

Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
The favourite; but what's favour
amongst four?

Polygamy may well be held in dread,
Not only as a sin, but as a *bore*:
Most wise men with *one* moderate
woman wed,
Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear
To make the nuptial couch a 'Bed of
Ware.'

XIII

His Highness, the sublimest of man-
kind,—

So styled according to the usual forms
Of every monarch, till they are consign'd
To those sad hungry Jacobins the
worms,

Who on the very loftiest kings have
dined,—

His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz'
charms,

Expecting all the welcome of a lover
(A 'Highland welcome' all the wide world
over).

Now here we should distinguish; for
howe'er

Kisses, sweet words, embraces, and all
that,

May look like what is—neither here nor
there,

They are put on as easily as a hat,
Or rather bonnet, which the fair sex wear,
Trimm'd either heads or hearts to
decorate,

Which form an ornament, but no more
part

Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

XV

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, resign'd
Rather to hide what pleases most
unknown,

Are the best tokens (to a modest mind)
Of love, when seated on his loveliest
throne,

A sincere woman's breast,—for over-
warm

Or over-cold annihilates the charm.

XVI

For over-warmth, if false, is worse than
truth;

If true, 'tis no great lease of its own fire;
For no one, save in very early youth,

Would like (I think) to trust all to desire,
Which is but a precarious bond, in sooth,
And apt to be transferr'd to the first
buyer

At a sad discount: while your over-chilly
Women, on t'other hand, seem somewhat
silly.

XVII

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,
For so it seems to lovers swift or slow,
Who fain would have a mutual flame
confess'd,

And see a sentimental passion glow,
Even were St. Francis' paramour their guest,
In his monastic concubine of snow;—
In short, the maxim for the amorous tribe is
Horatian, 'Medio tu tutissimus ibis.'

XVIII

The 'tu' 's *too* much,—but let it stand,—
the verse

Requires it, that's to say, the English
rhyme,

And not the pink of old hexameters;
But, after all, there's neither tune nor
time

In the last line, which cannot well be worse,
And was thrust in to close the octave's
chime:

I own no prosody can ever rate it
As a rule, but *truth* may, if you translate it.

XIX

If fair Gulbeyaz overdid her part,
I know not—it succeeded, and success

Is much in most things, not less in the
heart

Than other articles of female dress.
Self-love in man, too, beats all female art;

They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less:
And no one virtue yet except starvation,

Could stop that wont of vices—pro-
pagation.

We leave this royal couple to repose:

A bed is not a throne, and they may
sleep,

Whate'er their dreams be, if of joys or
woes:

Yet disappointed joys are woes as deep
As any man's clay mixture undergoes.

Our least of sorrows are such as we
weep;

'Tis the vile daily drop on drop which
wears

The soul out (like the stone) with petty
cares.

XXI

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill
 To pay, unpaid, protested or discounted
 At a per-centage; a child cross, dog ill,
 A favourite horse fallen lame just as he's
 mounted,
 A bad old woman making a worse will,
 Which leaves you minus of the cash you
 counted
 As certain;—these are paltry things, and
 yet
 I've rarely seen the man they did not fret.

XXII

I'm a philosopher; confound them all!
 Bills, beasts, and men, and—no! *not*
 womankind!
 With one good hearty curse I vent my gall,
 And then my stoicism leaves nought
 behind
 Which it can either pain or evil call,
 And I can give my whole soul up to
 mind;
 Though what is soul, or mind, their birth
 or growth,
 Is more than I know—the deuce take
 them both!

XXIII

So now all things are d—n'd one feels at
 ease,
 As after reading Athanasius' curse,
 Which doth your true believer so much
 please:
 I doubt if any now could make it worse
 O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
 'Tis so sententious, positive, and terse,
 And decorates the Book of Common
 Prayer,
 As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.

XXIV

Gulbeyaz and her lord were sleeping, or
 At least one of them!—Oh, the heavy
 night,
 When wicked wives, who love some
 bachelor,
 Lie down in dudgeon to sigh for the
 light
 Of the grey morning, and look vainly for
 Its twinkle through the lattice dusky
 quite—
 To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
 Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should
 wake!

XXV

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
 Also beneath the canopy of beds
 Four-posted and silk-curtain'd, which are
 given
 For rich men and their brides to lay
 their heads

Upon, in sheets white as what bards call
 'driven
 Snow.' Well! 'tis all hap-hazard when
 one weds.
 Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
 Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant's quean*.

XXVI

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
 With all the damsels in their long array,
 Had bow'd themselves before th' imperial
 eyes,
 And at the usual signal ta'en their way
 Back to their chambers, those long
 galleries
 In the seraglio, where the ladies lay
 Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms
 there
 Beating for love, as the caged bird's for
 air.

XXVII

I love the sex, and sometimes would
 reverse
 The tyrant's wish, 'that mankind only
 had
 One neck, which he with one fell stroke
 might pierce:'
 My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
 And much more tender on the whole than
 fierce;
 It being (not *now*, but only while a lad)
 That womankind had but one rosy
 mouth,
 To kiss them all at once from North to
 South.

XXVIII

Oh, enviable Briareus! with thy hands
 And heads, if thou hadst all things
 multiplied
 In such proportion!—But my Muse with-
 stands
 The giant thought of being a Titan's
 bride,
 Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
 So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
 Our hero through the labyrinth of love
 In which we left him several lines above.

XXIX

He went forth with the lovely Odaliskes,
 At the given signal join'd to their array:
 And though he certainly ran many risks,
 Yet he could not at times keep, by the
 way,
 (Although the consequences of such frisks
 Are worse than the worst damages men
 pay
 In moral England, where the thing's a
 tax,)
 From ogling all their charms from breasts
 to backs.

XXX

Still he forgot not his disguise:—along
The galleries from room to room they
walk'd,

A virgin-like and edifying throng,
By eunuchs flank'd; while at their head
there stalk'd

A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirr'd
or talk'd,

Without her sanction on their she-
parades:

Her title was 'the Mother of the Maids.'

XXXI

Whether she was a 'mother,' I know not,
Or whether they were 'maids' who
call'd her mother;

But this is her seraglio title, got

I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott:

Her office was to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when
they blunder'd.

XXXII

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men—

Except his majesty,—who, with her aid,
And guards, and bolts, and walls, and
now and then,

A slight example, just to cast a shade
Along the rest, contrived to keep this
den

Of beauties cool as an Italian convent,
Where all the passions have, alas! but one
vent.

XXXIII

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless—
how

Could you ask such a question?—but
we will

Continue. As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and
slow,

Like water-lilies floating down a rill—
Or rather lake—for rills do not run
slowly,—

Paced on most maiden-like and melan-
choly.

XXXIV

But when they reach'd their own apart-
ments, there,

Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites
broke loose,

Waves at spring-tide, or women any-
where

When freed from bonds (which are of
no great use

After all), or like Irish at a fair,
Their guards being gone, and as it were
a truce

Establish'd between them and bondage,
they

Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile, and
play.

XXXV

Their talk, of course, ran most on the new
comer;

Her shape, her hair, her air, her every-
thing:

Some thought her dress did not so much
become her,

Or wonder'd at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh

their summer,
'Others contended they were but in

spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in

height,
While others wish'd that she had been so

quite.

XXXVI

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel

fair,

And fresh, and 'beautiful exceedingly,'
Who with the brightest Georgians

might compare:

They wonder'd how Gulbeyaz, too, could
be

So silly as to buy slaves who might share
(If that his Highness wearied of his bride)

Her throne and power, and everything
beside.

XXXVII

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,

After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer,

specks

In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,

When they survey, with Christian eyes or
Heathen,

In a new face 'the ugliest creature breath-
ing.'

XXXVIII

And yet they had their little jealousies,
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,

Whether there are such things as
sympathies

Without our knowledge or our appro-
bation,

Although they could not see through his
disguise,

All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like magnetism, or devilism, or what

You please—we will not quarrel about
that:

XXXIX

But certain 'tis they all felt for their new
Companion something newer still, as
twere
A sentimental friendship through and
through,
Extremely pure, which made them all
concur
In wishing her their sister, save a few
Who wish'd they had a brother just like
her,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet
Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

Of those who had most genius for this
sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were
three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù; in short
(To save description), fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and
complexion;
They all alike admired their new con-
nexion.

XLI

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and
arm,
And feet so small they scarce seem'd
made to tread,
But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's
form
Look'd more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large, and languishing,
and lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

A kind of sleepy Venus seem'd Dudù,
Yet very fit to 'murder sleep' in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's trans-
cendent hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian
nose:
Few angles were there in her form, 'tis true,
Thinner she might have been, and yet
scarce lose:
Yet, after all, 'twould puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm
to *pare*.

XLIII

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day
breaking;
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-
shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking;

DON JUAN

She look'd (this simile's quite new) just cut
From marble, like Pygmalion's statue

The mortal and the marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into life.

XLIV

Lolah demanded the new damsel's
name—
'Juanna,'—Well, a pretty name enough.
Katinka ask'd her also whence she came—
'From Spain.'—'But where is
Spain?'—'Don't ask such stuff,
Nor show your Georgian ignorance—for
shame!'

Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough,
To poor Katinka: 'Spain's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier.'

XLV

Dudù said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair;
And looking at her stedfastly, she sigh'd,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger, without friend or guide,
And all abash'd, too, at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all
places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and
faces.

XLVI

But here the Mother of the Maids drew
near,
With 'Ladies, it is time to go to rest:
I'm puzzled what to do with you, my
dear,'
She added to Juanna, their new guest:
'Your coming has been unexpected here,
And every couch is occupied; you had
best
Partake of mine; but by to-morrow early
We will have all things settled for you
fairly.'

XLVII

Here Lolah interposed—'Mamma, you
know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot
bear
That anybody should disturb you so;
I'll take Juanna; we're a slender pair
Than you would make the half of;—don't
say no;
And I of your young charge will take due
care.'
But here Katinka interfered, and said,
'She also had compassion and a bed.'

XLVIII

'Besides, I hate to sleep alone,' quoth she.
The matron frown'd: 'Why so?'—
'For fear of ghosts,'
Replied Katinka; 'I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts;

DON JUAN

[CANTO VI

And then I have the worst dreams that
can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and
Gouls in hosts.

The dame replied, 'Between your dreams
and you,
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.

XLIX

'You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
Alone, for reasons which don't matter;
you

The same, Katinka, until by and by:
And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
Who's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
And will not toss and chatter the night
through.

What say you, child?'—Dudù said
nothing, as
Her talents were of the more silent class;

L

But she rose up, and kiss'd the matron's
brow

Between the eyes, and Lolah on both
cheeks,
Katinka too; and with a gentle bow
(Curt'sies are neither used by Turks nor
Greeks)

She took Juanna by the hand to show
Their place of rest, and left to both
their piques,
The others pouting at the matron's
preference
Of Dudù, though they held their tongues
from deference.

LI

It was a spacious chamber (Oda is
The Turkish title), and ranged round
the wall

Were couches, toilets—and much more
than this

I might describe, as I have seen it all,
But it suffices—little was amiss;

'Twas on the whole a nobly furnish'd
hall,
With all things ladies want, save one or
two,
And even those were nearer than they
knew.

LII

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet
creature,
Not very dashing, but extremely
winning,

With the most regulated charms of feature,
Which painters cannot catch like faces
sinning

Against proportion—the wild strokes of
nature
Which they hit off at once in the
beginning,

Full of expression, right or wrong, that
strike,
And pleasing, or displeasing, still are like.

LIII

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,
Where all was harmony, and calm, and
quiet,

Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without
mirth,
Which, if not happiness, is much more
nigh it

Than are your mighty passions and so
forth,

Which some call 'the sublime': I wish
they'd try it:

I've seen your stormy seas and stormy
women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

LIV

But she was pensive more than melan-
choly,

And serious more than pensive, and
serene,

It may be, more than either—not unholy
Her thoughts, at least till now, appear
to have been.

The strangest thing was, beauteous, she
was wholly

Unconscious, albeit turn'd of quick
seventeen,

That she was fair, or dark, or short, or
tall;

She never thought about herself at all.

LV

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
The Age of Gold (when gold was yet
unknown,

By which its nomenclature came to pass;
Thus most appropriately has been
shown

'Lucus à non lucendo,' not what was,
But what was not; a sort of style that's

grown
Extremely common in this age, whose

metal
The devil may decompose, but never
settle:

LVI

I think it may be of 'Corinthian Brass,'
Which was a mixture of all metals, but
The brazen uppermost). Kind reader!
pass

This long parenthesis: I could not shut
it sooner for the soul of me, and class

My faults even with your own! which
meaneth, Put

A kind construction upon them and me:
But that you won't—then don't—I am
not less free.

LVII

'Tis time we should return to plain
narration,
And thus my narrative proceeds:—
Dudù,
With every kindness short of ostentation,
Show'd Juan, or Juanna, through and
through
This labyrinth of females, and each
station
Described—what's strange—in words
extremely few:
I have but one simile, and that's a
blunder,
For wordless woman, which is *silent*
thunder.

And next she gave her (I say *her*, because
The gender still was epicene, at least
In outward show, which is a saving clause)
An outline of the customs of the East,
With all their chaste integrity of laws,
By which the more a harem is increased,
The stricter doubtless grow the vestal
duties
Of any supernumerary beauties.

LIX

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
Dudù was fond of kissing—which I'm
sure
That nobody can ever take amiss,
Because 'tis pleasant, so that it be pure,
And between females means no more than
this—
That they have nothing better near, or
newer.
'Kiss' rhymes to 'bliss' in fact as well as
verse—
I wish it never led to something worse.

LX

In perfect innocence she then unmade
Her toilet, which cost little, for she
was
A child of Nature carelessly array'd:
If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
'Twas like the fawn, which, in the lake
display'd,
Beholds her own shy, shadowy image
pass,
When first she starts, and then returns to
peep,
Admiring this new native of the deep.

LXI

And one by one her articles of dress
Were laid aside; but not before she
offer'd
Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
Of modesty declined the assistance
proffer'd:

Which pass'd well off—as she could do
no less;
Though by this *politesse* she rather
suffer'd,
Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins,
Which surely were invented for our sins,—

Making a woman like a porcupine,
Not to be rashly touch'd. But still more
dread,
Oh, ye! whose fate it is, as once 'twas
mine,
In early youth, to turn a lady's maid;—
I did my very boyish best to shine
In tricking her out for a masquerade:
The pins were placed sufficiently, but not
Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

LXIII

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
And I love wisdom more than she loves
me;
My tendency is to philosophise
On most things, from a tyrant to a tree;
But still the spouseless virgin *Knowledge*
flies.
What are we? and whence came we?
what shall be
Our *ultimate* existence? what's our
present?
Are questions answerless, and yet
incessant.

LXIV

There was deep silence in the chamber:
dim
And distant from each other burn'd the
lights,
And slumber hover'd o'er each lovely limb
Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
They should have walk'd there in their
sprightliest trim,
By way of change from their sepulchral
sites,
And shown themselves as ghosts of better
taste
Than haunting some old ruin or wild
waste.

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and clime,
and root,
In some exotic garden sometimes found,
With cost, and care, and warmth,
induced to shoot.
One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping, as the
fruit
Nods from the tree, was slumbering with
soft breath,
And lips apart, which show'd the pearls
beneath.

LXVI

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her
white arm,
And raven ringlets gather'd in dark
crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and
warm;
And smiling through her dream, as
through a cloud
The moon breaks, half unveil'd each
further charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snows shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour
of night
All bashfully to struggle into light.

LXVII

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for
'Twas night, but there were lamps, as
hath been said.
A third's all pallid aspect offer'd more
The traits of sleeping sorrow, and
betray'd
Through the heaved breast the dream of
some far shore
Beloved and deplored; while slowly
stray'd
(As night-dew, on a cypress glittering,
tinges
The black bough) tear-drops through her
eyes' dark fringes.

LXVIII

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
Lay in a breathless, hush'd, and stony
sleep;
White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,
Or Lot's wife done in salt,—or what you
will;—
My similes are gather'd in a heap,
So pick and choose—perhaps you'll be
content
With a carved lady on a monument.

LXIX

And lo! a fifth appears;—and what is she?
A lady of a 'certain age,' which means
Certainly aged—what her years might be
I know not, never counting past their
teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,
As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the
shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

But all this time how slept, or dream'd,
Dudù?
With strict inquiry I could ne'er discover,
And scorn to add a syllable untrue;
But ere the middle watch was hardly
over,

Just when the fading lamps waned dim
and blue,
And phantoms hover'd, or might seem
to hover,
To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she scream'd
out:

And that so loudly, that upstart'd all
The Oda, in a general commotion:
Matron and maids, and those whom you
may call
Neither, came crowding like the waves
of ocean,
One on the other, throughout the whole
hall,
All trembling, wondering, without the
least notion
More than I have myself of what could
make
The calm Dudù so turbulently wake.

LXXII

But wide awake she was, and round her bed
With floating draperies and with flying
hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried
tread,
And bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing
bare,
And bright as any meteor ever bred
By the North Pole,—they sought her
cause of care,
For she seem'd agitated, flush'd, and
frighten'd,
Her eye dilated, and her colour heighten'd.

LXXXIII

But what is strange—and a strong proof
how great
A blessing is sound sleep—Juanna lay
As fast as ever husband by his mate
In holy matrimony snores away.
Not all the clamour broke her happy state
Of slumber, ere they shook her,—so
they say
At least,—and then she, too, unclosed
her eyes,
And yawned a good deal with discreet
surprise.

LXXIV

And now commenced a strict investigation,
Which, as all spoke at once, and more
than once
Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narra-
tion,
Alike might puzzle either wit or dunce
To answer in a very clear oration.
Dudù had never pass'd for wanting
sense,
But being 'no orator as Brutus is,'
Could not at first expound what was
amiss.

LXXV

At length she said, that in a slumber
 sound
 She dream'd a dream, of walking in a
 wood—
 A 'wood obscure,' like that where Dante
 found
 Himself in at the age when all grow
 good;
 Life's half-way house, where dames with
 virtue crown'd
 Run much less risk of lovers turning
 rude;
 And that this wood was full of pleasant
 fruits,
 And trees of goodly growth and spreading
 roots;

LXXVI

And in the midst a golden apple grew,—
 A most prodigious pippin—but it
 hung
 Rather too high and distant; that she threw
 Her glances on it, and then, longing,
 flung
 Stones and whatever she could pick up, to
 Bring down the fruit, which still
 perversely clung
 To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
 But always at a most provoking height;—

LXXVII

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
 It fell down of its own accord before
 Her feet; that her first movement was to
 stoop
 And pick it up, and bite it to the core;
 That just as her young lip began to ope
 Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
 A bee flew out, and stung her to the heart,
 And so—she woke with a great scream
 and start.

LXXVIII

All this she told with some confusion and
 Dismay, the usual consequence of
 dreams
 Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
 To expound their vain and visionary
 gleams.
 I've known some odd ones which seem'd
 really plann'd
 Prophetically, or that which one deems
 A 'strange coincidence,' to use a phrase
 By which such things are settled now-a-
 days.

LXXIX

The damsels, who had thoughts of some
 great harm,
 Began, as is the consequence of fear,
 To scold a little at the false alarm
 That broke for nothing on their sleep-
 ing ear.

The matron, too, was wroth to leave her
 warm
 Bed for the dream she had been obliged
 to hear,
 And chafed at poor Dudù, who only
 sigh'd,
 And said, that she was sorry she had cried.

LXXX

'I've heard of stories of a cock and bull;
 But visions of an apple and a bee,
 To take us from our natural rest, and pull
 The whole Oda from their beds at half-
 past three,
 Would make us think the moon is at its
 full.
 You surely are unwell, child! we must
 see,
 To-morrow, what his Highness's
 physician
 Will say to this hysteric of a vision.

LXXXI

'And poor Juanna, too, the child's first
 night
 Within these walls, to be broke in upon
 With such a clamour—I had thought it
 right
 That the young stranger should not lie
 alone,
 And, as the quietest of all, she might
 With you, Dudù, a good night's rest
 have known:
 But now I must transfer her to the charge
 Of Lolah—though her couch is not so
 large.'

LXXXII

Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition;
 But poor Dudù, with large drops in her
 own,
 Resulting from the scolding or the vision,
 Implored that present pardon might be
 shown
 For this first fault, and that on no condi-
 tion
 (She added in a soft and piteous tone)
 Juanna should be taken from her, and
 Her future dreams should be all kept in
 hand.

LXXXIII

She promised never more to have a dream,
 At least to dream so loudly as just now;
 She wonder'd at herself how she could
 scream—
 'Twas foolish, nervous, as she must
 allow,
 A fond hallucination, and a theme
 For laughter—but she felt her spirits
 low,
 And begg'd they would excuse her; she'd
 get over
 This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

LXXXIV

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep
disclosed,

When all around rang like a tocsin bell;
She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show,
Save that of dreaming once 'malà-propos.

LXXXV

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turn'd round
And hid her face within Juanna's
breast:

Her neck alone was seen, but that was
found

The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blush'd, nor can
expound

The mystery of this rupture of their rest
All that I know is, that the facts I state
Are true as truth has ever been of late.

LXXXVI

And so good night to them—or, if you will,
Good morrow—for the cock had
crown, and light

Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled
into sight

Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each
height

That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the
Kurds.

LXXXVII

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and
pale

As Passion rises, with its bosom worn,
Array'd herself with mantle, gem, and
veil.

The nightingale that sings with the deep
thorn,

Which fable places in her breast of wail,
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those
Whose headlong passions form their
proper woes.

LXXXVIII

And that's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift;—
But that they will not do without suspicion,

Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of
vision

While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is
natural,

The numbers are too great for them to
flatter all.

LXXXIX

Rose the sultana from a bed of splendour,
Softer than the soft Sybarite's, who
cried

Aloud because his feelings were too tender
To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his
side,—

So beautiful that art could little mend her,
Though pale with conflicts between love
and pride;

So agitated was she with her error,
She did not even look into the mirror.

Also arose about the self-same time,
Perhaps a little later, her great lord,
Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime,
And of a wife by whom he was abhorr'd;
A thing of much less import in that
clime—

At least to those of incomes which
afford

The filling up their whole connubial
cargo—

Than where two wives are under an
embargo.

XCI

He did not think much on the matter, nor
Indeed on any other: as a man

He liked to have a handsome paramour
At hand, as one may like to have a fan,

And therefore of Circassians had good
store,

As an amusement after the Divan;
Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
Had made him lately bask in his bride's
beauty.

XCII

And now he rose; and after due ablutions
Exacted by the customs of the East,

And prayers and other pious evolutions,
He drank six cups of coffee at the least,

And then withdrew to hear about the
Russians,

Whose victories had recently increased
In Catherine's reign, whom glory still
adores,

As greatest of all sovereigns and w——s.

XCIII

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander!
Her son's son, let not this last phrase
offend

Thine ear, if it should reach—and now
rhymes wander

Almost as far as Petersburg, and lend
A dreadful impulse to each loud meander

Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves,
which blend

Their roar even with the Baltic's—so you
be

Your father's son, 'tis quite enough for me.

XCIV

To call men love-begotten, or proclaim
 Their mothers as the antipodes of
 Timon,
 That hater of mankind, would be a shame,
 A libel, or whate'er you please to
 rhyme on:
 But people's ancestors are history's game;
 And if one lady's slip could leave a
 crime on
 All generations, I should like to know
 What pedigree the best would have to
 show?

XCv

Had Catherine and the sultan understood
 Their own true interests, which kings
 rarely know,
 Until 'tis taught by lessons rather rude,
 There was a way to end their strife,
 although
 Perhaps precarious, had they but thought
 good,
 Without the aid of prince or plenipo:
 She to dismiss her guards and he his
 harem,
 And for their other matters, meet and
 share 'em.

XCVI

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
 His daily council upon ways and means
 How to encounter with this martial scold,
 This modern Amazon and queen of
 queans;
 And the perplexity could not be told
 Of all the pillars of the state, which
 leans
 Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
 Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

XCVII

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was
 gone,
 Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
 For love or breakfast; private, pleasing,
 lone,
 And rich with all contrivances which
 grace
 Those gay recesses:—many a precious
 stone
 Sparkled along its roof, and many a
 vase
 Of porcelain held in the fetter'd flowers
 Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

XCVIII

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and
 marble,
 Vied with each other on this costly spot;
 And singing birds without were heard to
 warble;
 And the stain'd glass which lighted this
 fair grot

Varied each ray;—but all descriptions
 garble
 The true effect, and so we had better
 not
 Be too minute; an outline is the best,—
 A lively reader's fancy does the rest.

XCIX

And here she summon'd Baba, and
 required
 Don Juan at his hands, and information
 Of what had pass'd since all the slaves
 retired,
 And whether he had occupied their
 station:
 If matters had been managed as desired,
 And his disguise with due consideration
 Kept up; and above all, the where and
 how
 He had pass'd the night, was what she
 wish'd to know.

C

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
 To this long catechism of questions,
 ask'd
 More easily than answer'd,—that he had
 tried
 His best to obey in what he had been
 task'd;
 But there seem'd something that he
 wish'd to hide,
 Which hesitation more betray'd than
 mask'd;
 He scratch'd his ear, the infallible resource
 To which embarrass'd people have
 recourse.

CI

Gulbeyaz was no model of true patience,
 Nor much disposed to wait in word or
 deed;
 She liked quick answers in all conversa-
 tions;
 And when she saw him stumbling like a
 steed
 In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh
 ones;
 And as his speech grew still more
 broken-kneed,
 Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to
 sparkle,
 And her proud brow's blue veins to swell
 and darkle.

CII

When Baba saw these symptoms, which
 he knew
 To bode him no great good, he depre-
 cated
 Her anger, and beseech'd she'd hear him
 through—
 He could not help the thing which he
 related:

Then out it came at length, that to Dudù
 Juan was given in charge, as hath been
 stated;
 But not by Baba's fault, he said, and
 swore on
 The holy camel's hump, besides the
 Koran.

CIII

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
 The discipline of the whole harem bore,
 As soon as they reënter'd their own room,
 For Baba's function stopt short at the
 door,
 Had settled all; nor could he then pre-
 sume

(The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
 Without exciting such suspicion as
 Might make the matter still worse than it
 was.

CIV

He hoped, indeed he thought, he could be
 sure,
 Juan had not betray'd himself; in fact
 'Twas certain that his conduct had been
 pure,

Because a foolish or imprudent act
 Would not alone have made him insecure,
 But ended in his being found out and
 sack'd,

And thrown into the sea.—Thus Baba
 spoke
 Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no
 joke.

CV

This he discreetly kept in the back ground,
 And talk'd away—and might have
 talk'd till now,

For any further answer that he found,
 So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz'
 brow:

Her cheek turn'd ashes, ears rung, brain
 whirl'd round,

As if she had received a sudden blow,
 And the heart's dew of pain sprang fast
 and chilly

O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a lily.

CVI

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
 Baba thought she would faint, but
 there he err'd—

It was but a convulsion, which though
 short

Can never be described; we all have
 heard,

And some of us have felt thus 'all amot,'
 When things beyond the common have
 occur'd;—

Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
 What she could ne'er express—then how
 should I?

CVII

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
 Stands on her tripod, agonised, and full
 Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
 When all the heart-strings like wild
 horses pull

The heart asunder;—then, as more or
 less

Their speed abated or their strength
 grew dull,

She sunk down on her seat by slow
 degrees,

And bow'd her throbbing head o'er
 trembling knees.

CVIII

Her face declined and was unseen; her
 hair

Fell in long tresses like the weeping
 willow,

Sweeping the marble underneath her
 chair,

Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
 A low, soft ottoman), and black despair

Stir'd up and down her bosom like a
 billow,

Which rushes to some shore whose
 shingles check

Its farther course, but must receive its
 wreck.

CIX

Her head hung down, and her long hair
 in stooping

Conceal'd her features better than a
 veil;

And one hand o'er the ottoman lay
 drooping,

White, waxen, and as alabaster pale:
 Would that I were a painter! to be group-

ing
 All that a poet drags into detail!

Oh that my words were colours! but their
 tints

May serve perhaps a few outlines or slight
 hints.

CX

Baba, who knew by experience when to
 talk

And when to hold his tongue, now held
 it till

This passion might blow o'er, nor dared
 to balk

Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will.
 At length she rose up, and began to walk

Slowly along the room, but silent still,
 And her brow clear'd, but not her

troubled eye;
 The wind was down but still the sea ran

high.

CXI

She stopp'd, and raised her head to
 speak—but paused,
 And then moved on again with rapid
 pace;
 Then slacken'd it, which is the march
 most caused
 By deep emotion:—you may some-
 times trace
 A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed
 By Sallust in his Catiline, who, chased
 By all the demons of all passions, show'd
 Their work even by the way in which he
 trode.

CXII

Gulbeyaz stopp'd and beckon'd Baba:—
 'Slave!
 Bring the two slaves!' she said in a low
 tone,
 But one which Baba did not like to brave,
 And yet he shudder'd, and seem'd
 rather prone
 To prove reluctant, and begg'd leave to
 crave
 (Though he well knew the meaning) to
 be shown
 What slaves her highness wish'd to
 indicate,
 For fear of any error, like the late.

CXIII

'The Georgian and her paramour,'
 replied
 The imperial bride—and added, 'Let
 the boat
 Be ready by the secret portal's side:
 You know the rest.' The words stuck
 in her throat,
 Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
 And of this Baba willingly took note,
 And begg'd by every hair of Mahomet's
 beard,
 She would revoke the order he had heard.

CXIV

'To hear is to obey,' he said; 'but still,
 Sultana, think upon the consequence:
 It is not that I shall not all fulfil
 Your orders, even in their severest
 sense;
 But such precipitation may end ill,
 Even at your own imperative expense:
 I do not mean destruction and exposure,
 In case of any premature disclosure;

CXV

'But your own feelings. Even should all
 the rest
 Be hidden by the rolling waves, which
 hide
 Already many a once love-beaten breast
 Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide—

You love this boyish, new, seraglio
 guest,
 And if this violent remedy be tried—
 Excuse my freedom, when I here assure
 you,
 That killing him is not the way to cure you.'

CXVI

'What dost thou know of love or feel-
 ing!—Wretch!
 Begone!' she cried, with kindling eyes—
 'and do
 My bidding!' Baba vanish'd, for to
 stretch
 His own remonstrance further he well
 knew
 Might end in acting as his own 'Jack
 Ketch';
 And though he wish'd extremely to get
 through
 This awkward business without harm to
 others,
 He still prefer'd his own neck to another's.

CXVII

Away he went then upon his commission,
 Growing and grumbling in good
 Turkish phrase
 Against all women of whate'er condition,
 Especially sultanas and their ways;
 Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,
 Their never knowing their own mind
 two days,
 The trouble that they gave, their immorality,
 Which made him daily bless his own
 neutrality.

CXVIII

And then he call'd his brethren to his aid,
 And sent one on a summons to the pair,
 That they must instantly be well array'd,
 And above all be comb'd even to a hair,
 And brought before the empress, who had
 made
 Inquiries after them with kindest care:
 At which Dudù look'd strange, and Juan
 silly;
 But go they must at once, and will I—
 nill I.

CXIX

And here I leave them at their preparation
 For the imperial presence, wherein
 whether
 Gulbeyaz show'd them both com-
 miseration,
 Or got rid of the parties altogether,
 Like other angry ladies of her nation,—
 Are things the turning of a hair or
 feather
 May settle; but far be't from me to anti-
 pate
 In what way feminine caprice may
 dissipate.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VI

XXX

I leave them for the present with good wishes,
Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange
Another part of history; for the dishes
Of this our banquet we must sometimes change;
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,
Although his situation now seems strange,
And scarce secure, as such digressions are fair,
The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.

CANTO THE SEVENTH

O Love! O Glory! what are you who fly
Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the Polar sky
Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they Assume,
then leave us on our freezing way.

II

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things—but a *show*?

III

They accuse me—*Me*—the present writer of
The present poem—of—I know not what—
A tendency to under-rate and scoff
At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.

Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Dante's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,
By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.

'Tis not their fault, nor mine, if this be

For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes.—We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
'To know that nothing could be known'; a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only 'like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean—Truth.'

Ecclesiastes said, 'that all is vanity'—
Most modern preachers say the same,
or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:
In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

VII

Dogs, or men!—for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs—your betters far—ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying
To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying
Of wolves, will the bright Muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies—then howl your idle wrath!
While she still silver: o'er your gloomy path.

VIII

'Fierce loves and faithless wars'—I am not sure
If this be the right reading—'tis no matter;
The fact's about the same, I am secure;
I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,
And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
By Souvaroff, or Anglicè Suwarrow,
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow.

IX

The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed
Upon the Danube's left branch and left
bank,
With buildings in the Oriental taste,
But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
Or was at least, unless 'tis since defaced,
Which with your conquerors is a common
prank:
It stands some eighty versts from the high
sea,
And measures round of toises thousands
three.

X

Within the extent of this fortification
A borough is comprised along the
height
Upon the left, which from its loftier
station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades *upright*,
So placed as to *impede* the fire of those
Who held the place, and to *assist* the foe's.

XI

This circumstance may serve to give a
notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:
But the town ditch below was deep as
ocean,
The rampart higher than you'd wish to
hang;
But then there was a great want of pre-
caution
(Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
Nor work advanced, nor cover'd way was
there,
To hint at least 'Here is no thoroughfare.'

XII

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
And walls as thick as most skulls born
as yet;
Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St.
George,
Casemated one, and t'other 'à bar-
bette,'
Of Danube's bank took formidable
charge;
While two-and-twenty cannon duly set
Rose over the town's right side, in brist-
ling tier,
Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

XIII

But from the river the town's open quite,
Because the Turks could never be per-
suaded
A Russian vessel e'er would heave in
sight;
And such their creed was till they were
invaded,

When it grew rather late to set things right:
But as the Danube could not well be
waded,
They look'd upon the Muscovite flotilla,
And only shouted, 'Allah!' and 'Bis Millah!'

XIV

The Russians now were ready to attack;
But oh, ye goddesses of war and glory!
How shall I spell the name of each
Cossacque
Who were immortal, could one tell
their story?
Alas! what to their memory can lack?
Achilles' self was not more grim and
gory
Than thousands of this new and polish'd
nation,
Whose names want nothing but—pro-
nunciation.

Still I'll record a few, if but to increase
Our euphony: there was Strongenoff,
and Strokonoff,
Meknop, Serge Low, Arséniew of modern
Greece,
And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff,
and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants apiece;
And more might be found out, if I
could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious
strumpet),
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

XVI

And cannot tune those discords of narra-
tion,
Which may be names at Moscow, into
rhyme;
Yet there were several worth commemora-
tion,
As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
Soft words, too, fitted for the peroration
Of Londonderry drawingl against time,
Ending in 'ischskin,' 'ousckin,' 'iffskchy,'
'ouski,'
Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

XVII

Scherematoft and Chrematoft, Koklophiti,
Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin
Pouskin,
All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoff'd
high
Against a foe, or ran a sabre through
skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,
Unless to make their kettle-drums a
new skin
Out of their hides, if parchment had
grown dear,
And no more handy substitute been near.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VII

XVIII

Then there were foreigners of much
renown,

Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers;
Also to have the sacking of a town;
A pleasant thing to young men at their
years.

'Mongst them were several Englishmen
of pith,
Sixteen call'd Thomson, and nineteen
named Smith.

XIX

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson;—all
the rest
Had been call'd '*Jemmy*,' after the
great bard;

I don't know whether they had arms or
crest,

But such a godfather's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the
best

Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict
or ward,

Was *he*, since so renown'd 'in country
quarters

At Halifax'; but now he served the Tartars.

XX

The rest were Jacks and Gills and Wills
and Bills,

But when I've added that the elder Jack
Smith

Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest black-
smith,

I've said all I know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking
'Schmacksmith.'

A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

XXI

I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a
god I

Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*
May make up for a *bullet* in his body?

I hope this little question is no sin,
Because, though I am but a simple noddy,
I think one Shakespeare puts the same
thought in

The mouth of some one in his plays so
doting,

Which many people pass for wits by
quoting.

XXII

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant,
young, and gay;

But I'm too great a patriot to record
Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;
I'd rather tell ten lies than say a word

Of truth;—such truths are treason; they
betray

Their country; and as traitors are ab-
horr'd,

Who name the French in English, save to
show

How Peace should make John Bull the
Frenchman's foe.

XXIII

The Russians, having built two batteries
on

An isle near Ismail, had two ends in
view;

The first was to bombard it, and knock
down

The public buildings and the private
too,

No matter what poor souls might be
undone.

The city's shape suggested this, 'tis
true;

Form'd like an amphitheatre, each dwell-
ing

Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

XXIV

The second object was to profit by
The moment of the general con-
sternation,

To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay
nigh,

Extremely tranquil, anchor'd at its
station:

But a third motive was as probably
To frighten them into capitulation;

A phantasy which sometimes seizes
warriors,

Unless they are game as bull-dogs and
fox-terriers.

XXV

A habit rather blameable, which is
That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this

The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and
Smith;

One of the valorous 'Smiths' whom we
shall miss

Out of those nineteen who late rhymed
to 'pith';

But 'tis a name so spread o'er 'Sir' and
'Madam,'

That one would think the *first* who bore
it '*Adam*'.

XXVI

The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a
hurry;

Thus the same cause which makes a verse
want feet,

And throws a cloud o'er Longman and
John Murray,

When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is
necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls 'murder,' and at others
'glory.'

XXVII

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste, or waste, I neither know
nor care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either miss'd, or they were never miss'd,
And added greatly to the missing list.

XXVIII

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reach'd a spot to take effect;
The match was lit too soon, and no
assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 'twas dawn, the Turks
slept fast as ever.

XXIX

At seven they rose, however, and survey'd
The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'Twas nine, when still advancing un-
dismay'd,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was return'd with interest, I may
say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

XXX

For six hours bore they without inter-
mission
The Turkish fire, and, aided by their own
Land batteries, work'd their guns with
great precision;
At length they found mere cannonade
alone
By no means would produce the town's
submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

XXXI

The Moslem, too, had lost both ships and
men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and
sail'd again,
And gall'd the Russians with a heavy
fire,

And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their
desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the
water
Pell-mell, and with a whole gazette of
slaughter.

XXXII

'If' (says the historian here) 'I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to
say';
And so he says no more—but pays his
court
To some distinguish'd strangers in that
fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and
Damas,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame
has.

XXXIII

This being the case, may show us what
Fame is:
For out of these three '*preux Cheva-
liers*,' how
Many of common readers give a guess
That such existed? (and they may live
now
For aught we know.) Renown's all hit or
miss;
There's fortune even in fame, we must
allow.
'Tis true, the Memoirs of the Prince de
Ligne
Have half withdrawn from *him* oblivion's
screen.

XXXIV

But here are men who fought in gallant
actions
As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such trans-
actions
Their names are rarely found, nor often
sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad con-
tractions,
And is extinguish'd sooner than she
ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each
Gazette.

XXXV

In short, this last attack, though rich in
glory,
Show'd that *somewhere, somehow*,
there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian
story)
Most strongly recommended an assault;

In which he was opposed by young and
hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must
halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the
breach.

XXXVI

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be call'd
in question,
For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indiges-
tion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and
wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest
on
The soil of the green province he had
wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

XXXVII

This was Potemkin—a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made
great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.
This fellow, being six foot high, could
raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a
steepie.

XXXVIII

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the prince, and he suc-
ceeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he
pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time the batteries pro-
ceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's
border
Were briskly fired and answer'd in due
order.

XXXIX

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embark'd, the siege
to raise,
A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panthers for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in war's art,
By his despatches couch'd in pithy
phrase;
Announcing the appointment of that
lover of
Battles to the command, Field-Marshal
Souvaroff.

XL

The letter of the prince to the same
marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be
partial—
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o'er-
arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight
applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
'You will take Ismail at whatever price.'

XLI

'Let there be light!' said God, 'and there
was light!'
'Let there be blood!' says man, and
there's a sea!
The fiat of this spoil'd child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could
decree
More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they
should be
Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit;
For war cuts up not only branch, but root.

XLII

Our friends, the Turks, who with loud
'Allahs' now
Began to signalise the Russ retreat,
Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
In thinking that their enemy is beat,
(Or beaten, if you insist on grammar,
though
I never think about it in a heat.)
But here I say the Turks were much mis-
taken,
Who hating hogs, yet wish'd to save their
bacon.

XLIII

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
In sight two horsemen, who were
deem'd Cossacques
For some time, till they came in nearer
view.
They had but little baggage at their
backs,
For there were but three shirts between
the two;
But on they rode upon two Ukraine
hacks,
Till, in approaching, were at length descried
In this plain pair, Suvarrow and his guide.

XLIV

'Great joy to London now!' says some
great fool,
When London had a grand illumina-
tion,
Which to that bottle-conjurer, John Bull,
Is of all dreams the first hallucination;

CANTO VII]

DON JUAN

So that the streets of colour'd lamps are full,
That sage (*said John*) surrenders at discretion
His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

XLV

'Tis strange that he should further 'Damn his eyes,'
For they are damn'd; that once all-famous oath
Is to the devil now no further prize,
Since John has lately lost the use of both.
Debt he calls wealth, and taxes Paradise;
And Famine, with her gaunt and bony growth,
Which stare him in the face, he won't examine,
Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

XLVI

But to the tale;—great joy unto the camp!
To Russian, Tartar, English, French,
Cossacque,
O'er whom Suwarrow shone like a gas lamp,
Presaging a most luminous attack;
Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,
Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
Which all who saw it follow'd, wrong or right.

XLVII

But certes matters took a different face;
There was enthusiasm and much applause,
The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
And all presaged good fortune to their cause.
Within a cannon-shot length of the place
They drew, constructed ladders, repair'd flaws
In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
And all kinds of benevolent machines.

XLVIII

'Tis thus the spirit of a single mind
Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
Or a bell-wether form the flock's connexion

By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

XLIX

The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
That they were going to a marriage feast
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
Since there is discord after both at least):
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little—odd—old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

But so it was; and every preparation
Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
Was also in three columns, with a thirst
For glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attack'd by water.

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which unanimity,
That stranger to most councils, here prevail'd,
As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
And every difficulty being dispell'd,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.

LII

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deign'd to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil;
Just as you'd break a sucking salaman-
der
To swallow flame, and never take it ill:
He show'd them how to mount a ladder
(which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VII

LIII

Also he dress'd up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and
dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these
machines,
By way of lesson against actual Turks;
And when well practised in these mimic
scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the
works;
At which your wise men sneer'd in phrases
witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

LIV

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce
conceive;
Yet men resolved to dash through thick
and thin
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled:—there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and
friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

LV

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting,
pondering,
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most
wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praising, instructing, desolating, plunder-
ing;
Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent
to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

LVI

The day before the assault, while upon
drill—
For this great conqueror play'd the
corporal—
Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks
round a hill,
Had met a party towards the twilight's
fall,
One of whom spoke their tongue—or
well or ill,
'Twas much that he was understood at
all;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or
manner,
They found that he had fought beneath
their banner.

LVII

Whereon immediately at his request
They brought him and his comrades to
head-quarters;

Their dress was Moslem, but you might
have guess'd
That these were merely masquerading
Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashion'd
vest
Lurk'd Christianity; which sometimes
barters
Her inward grace for outward show, and
makes
It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

LVIII

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt
Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,
And lecturing on the noble art of
killing,—
For deeming human clay but common dirt,
This great philosopher was thus
instilling
His maxims, which to martial compre-
hension
Proved death in battle equal to a pen-
sion;—

LIX

Suwarrow, when he saw this company
Of Cossacques and their prey, turn'd
round and cast
Upon them his slow brow and piercing
eye:—
'Whence come ye?'—'From Constanti-
nople last,
Captives just now escaped,' was the reply.
'What are ye?'—'What you see us.'
Briefly pass'd
This dialogue; for he who answer'd knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words
but few.

LX

'Your names?'—'Mine's Johnson, and
my comrade's Juan;
The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman.' The chief
threw on
The party a slight glance, then said, 'I
have heard
Your name before, the second is a new
one:
To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass:—I think I have heard
your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?'—'The same.'

LXI

'You served at Widdin?'—'Yes.'—'You
led the attack?'
'I did.'—'What next?'—'I really hardly
know.'
'You were the first I' the breach?'—'I was
not slack
At least to follow those who might be so.'

'What follow'd?'—'A shot laid me on my back,
And I became a prisoner to the foe.'
'You shall have vengeance, for the town
surrounded
Is twice as strong as that where you were
wounded.

LXII

'Where will you serve?'—'Where'er you
please.'—'I know
You like to be the hope of the forlorn,
And doubtless would be foremost on the
foe

After the hardships you've already
borne.
And this young fellow—say what can he do?
He with the beardless chin and gar-
ments torn?'
'Why, general, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the
assault.'

LXIII

'He shall if that he dare.' Here Juan bow'd
Low as the compliment deserved. Su-
warrow
Continued: 'Your old regiment's allow'd,
By special providence, to lead to-
morrow,
Or it may be to-night, the assault: I have
vow'd
To several saints, that shortly plough or
harrow
Shall pass o'er what was Ismail, and its
tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

LXIV

'So now, my lads, for glory!'—Here he
turn'd
And drill'd away in the most classic
Russian,
Until each high, heroic bosom burn'd
For cash and conquest, as if from a
cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly
spurn'd
All earthly goods save tithes) and bade
them push on
To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress
Catherine.

LXV

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy
Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents
high
In his resumed amusement. 'I confess
My debt in being thus allow'd to die
Among the foremost; but if you'd ex-
press
Explicitly our several posts, my friend
And self would know what duty to attend.'

LEVI

'Right! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which
should be
Now under arms. Ho! Katskoff, take him
to—
(Here he call'd up a Polish orderly)
His post, I mean the regiment Nikolalew:
The stranger stripling may remain with
me;
He's a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent.'

LXVII

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:
The ladies,—who by no means had been
bred
To be disposed of in a way so new,
Although their harem education led
Doubtless to that of doctrines the most
true,
Passive obedience,—now raised up the
head,
With flashing eyes and starting tears, and
flung,
Their arms, as hens their wings about
their young,

LXVIII

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honour'd by the greatest
chief
That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in
grief.
Oh, foolish mortals! Always taught in
vain!
Oh, glorious laurel! since for one sole
leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing
sea.

LXIX

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, sur-
vey'd
The women with their hair about their ears
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions,
when their trade
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes—and such was
Suwarrow.

LXX

He said,—and in the kindest Calmuck
tone,—
'Why, Johnson, what the devil do you
mean
By bringing women here? They shall be
shown
All the attention possible, and seen

DON JUAN

[CANTO VII

In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should
have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives;
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives.

LXXI

'May it please your excellency,' thus replied
Our British friend, 'these are the wives
of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own
bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so
bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

LXXII

'But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward
scrape.
I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used gen-
teelly.'

LXXIII

Meantime these two poor girls, with swim-
ming eyes,
Look'd on as if in doubt if they could
trust
Their own protectors; nor was their sur-
prise
Less than their grief (and truly not less
just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmear'd with
dust,
Stript to his waistcoat, and that not too
clean,
More fear'd than all the sultans ever seen.

LXXIV

For everything seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to
them,
Who were accusom'd, as a sort of god,
To see the sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail's a diadem)
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do with-
out.

LXXV

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,
Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:
Don Juan, who was much more senti-
mental,

Swore they should see him by the dawn of
day,
Or that the Russian army should repent
all:
And, strange to say, they found some con-
solation
In this—for females like exaggeration.

LXXVI

And then with tears, and sighs, and some
slight kisses,
They parted for the present—these to
await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,
What sages call Chance, Providence, or
Fate—
(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,
A mortgage on Humanity's estate)—
While their beloved friends began to arm,
To burn a town which never did them
harm.

LXXVII

Suwarrow,—who but saw things in the
gross,
Being much too gross to see them in
detail,
Who calculated life as so much dross,
And as the wind a widow'd nation's
wail,
And cared as little for his army's loss
(So that their efforts should at length
prevail)
As wife and friends did for the boils of
Job,—
What was't to him to hear two women sob?

LXXVIII

Nothing.—The work of glory still went on
In preparations for a cannonade
As terrible as that of Ilion,
If Homer had found mortars ready
made;
But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
We only can but talk of escalade,
Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries,
bayonets, bullets;
Hard words, which stick in the soft
Muses' gullets.

LXXIX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
All ears, though long; all ages, though
so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm
Arms to which men will never more
resort,
Unless gunpowder should be found to
harm
Much less than is the hope of every
court,
Which now is leagued young Freedom to
annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy:—

LXXX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
 To paint a siege, wherein more men
 were slain,
 With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
 Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
 And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
 To vie with thee would be about as vain
 As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
 But still we moderns equal you in blood;

LXXXI

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
 And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
 Of which, howe'er the Muse describes
 each act,
 There should be ne'ertheless a slight
 substratum.
 But now the town is going to be attack'd;
 Great deeds are doing—how shall I relate 'em?
 Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus
 watches
 To colour up his rays from your despatches.

LXXXII

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
 Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
 Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
 When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
 Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart,
 ye
 Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded),
 A portion of your fading twilight hues,
 So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

LXXXIII

When I call 'fading' martial immortality,
 I mean, that every age and every year,
 And almost every day, in sad reality,
 Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
 Who, when we come to sum up the totality
 Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
 Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
 Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

LXXXIV

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery,
 scarlet,
 Are things immortal to immortal man,
 As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
 An uniform to boys is like a fan
 To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
 But deems himself the first in Glory's van.
 But Glory's glory; and if you would find
 What *that* is—ask the pig who sees the
 wind!

LXXXV

At least *he feels it*, and some say *he sees*,
 Because he runs before it like a pig;
 Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
 Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
 A schooner, or—but it is time to cease
 This Canto, ere my Muse perceives
 fatigue.
 The next shall ring a peal to shake all
 people,
 Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

LXXXVI

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull
 night,
 The hum of armies gathering rank on
 rank!
 Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
 Along the leaguer'd wall and bristling
 bank
 Of the arm'd river, while with straggling
 light
 The stars peep through the vapours dim
 and dank,
 Which curl in curious wreaths:—how soon
 the smoke
 Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak!

LXXXVII

Here pause we for the present—as even
 then
 That awful pause, dividing life from
 death,
 Struck for an instant on the hearts of
 men,
 Thousands of whom were drawing their
 last breath!
 A moment—and all will be life again!
 The march! the charge! the shouts of
 either faith,
 Hurrah! and Allah! and—one moment
 more—
 The death-cry drowning in the battle's
 roar.

CANTO THE EIGHTH

I

Oh, blood and thunder! and oh, blood and
 wounds!
 These are but vulgar oaths, as you may
 deem,
 Too gentle reader! and most shocking
 sounds:
 And so they are; yet thus is Glory's
 dream
 Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds
 At present such things, since they are
 her theme,
 So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
 Bellona, what you will—they mean but
 wars.

II

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the
men

To wield them in their terrible array.
The army, like a lion from his den,
March'd forth with nerve and sinews
bent to slay,—

A human Hydra, issuing from its fen
To breathe destruction on its winding
way,

Whose heads were heroes, which, cut off
in vain,

Immediately in others grew again.

III

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail, per-
chance

In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might en-
hance,

To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to
advance.

The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

IV

And why?—because it brings self-appro-
bation;

Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a
nation,

Which (it may be) has not much left to
spare,

A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption
gape or stare,

Yet, in the end, except in freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

V

And such they are—and such they will be
found:

Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not
worlds undone.

How sweetly on the ear such echoes
sound!

While the mere victor's may appal or
stun

The servile and the vain, such names will
be

A watchword till the future shall be free.

VI

The night was dark, and the thick mist
allow'd

Nought to be seen save the artillery's
flame,

Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the
same—

A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and
loud

Long booming of each peal on peal,
o'ercame

The ear far more than thunder; for
Heaven's flashes

Spare, or smite rarely—man's make mil-
lions ashes!

VII

The column order'd on the assault scarce
pass'd

Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with
like voices:

Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream
embraced,

Which rock'd as 'twere beneath the
mighty noises;

While the whole rampart blazed like Etna,
when

The restless Titan hiccups in his den;

VIII

And one enormous shout of 'Allah!' rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar

Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and
shore

Resounded 'Allah!' and the clouds which
close

With thick'ning canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark!

through
All sounds it pierceth, 'Allah! Allah! Hu!'

IX

The columns were in movement one and
all,

But of the portion which attack'd by
water,

Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
Though led by Arseniew, that great son

of slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.

'Carnage, (so Wordsworth tells you) is
God's daughter:—'

If he speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

X

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the
knee;

Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball
between

His cap and head, which proves the head
to be

Aristocratic as was ever seen,
Because it then received no injury

More than the cap; in fact, the ball
could mean

No harm unto a right legitimate head;
'Ashes to ashes'—why not lead to lead?

XI

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,
 Insisting on removal of the *prince*
 Amidst some groaning thousands dying
 near,—
 All common fellows, who might writhe
 and wince,
 And shriek for water into a deaf ear,—
 The General Markow, who could thus
 evince
 His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
 To teach him greater, had his own leg
 broken.

XII

Three hundred cannon threw up their
 emetic,
 And thirty thousand muskets flung their
 pills
 Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
 Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills:
 Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians,
 yet tick,
 Like the death-watch, within our ears
 the ills
 Past, present, and to come;—but all may
 yield
 To the true portrait of one battle-field;

XIII

There the still varying pangs, which multi-
 ply
 Until their very number makes men hard
 By the infinities of agony,
 Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may
 regard—
 The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
 Turn'd back within its socket,—these
 reward
 Your rank and file by thousands, while the
 rest
 May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

XIV

Yet I love glory;—glory's a great thing;—
 Think what it is to be in your old age
 Maintain'd at the expense of your good
 king:
 A moderate pension shakes full many a
 sage,
 And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
 Which is still better; thus in verse to
 wage
 Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
 Half-pay for life, make mankind worth
 destroying.

XV

The troops, already disembark'd, push'd on
 To take a battery on the right: the others,
 Who landed lower down, their landing
 done,
 Had set to work as briskly as their
 brothers:

Being grenadiers, they mounted one by
 one,
 Cheerful as children climb the breasts of
 mothers,
 O'er the intrenchment and the palisade,
 Quite orderly, as if upon parade.

XVI

And this was admirable; for so hot
 The fire was, that were red *Vesuvius*
 loaded,
 Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
 And shells or hells, it could not more
 have goaded.
 Of officers a third fell on the spot,
 A thing which victory by no means
 boded
 To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
 Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are
 at fault.

XVII

But here I leave the general concern,
 To track our hero on his path of fame:
 He must his laurels separately earn;
 For fifty thousand heroes, name by
 name,
 Though all deserving equally to turn
 A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
 Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory,
 And what is worse still, a much longer
 story:

XVIII

And therefore we must give the greater
 number
 To the Gazette—which doubtless fairly
 dealt
 By the deceased, who lie in famous
 slumber
 In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt
 Their clay for the last time their souls
 encumber;—
 Thrice happy he whose name has been
 well spelt
 In the despatch: I knew a man whose loss
 Was printed *Grove*, although his name was
 Grose.

XIX

Juan and Johnson join'd a certain corps,
 And fought away with might and main,
 not knowing
 The way which they had never trod before,
 And still less guessing where they might
 be going;
 But on they march'd, dead bodies tramp-
 ling o'er,
 Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweat-
 ing, glowing,
 But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
 To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright
 bulletin.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VIII

XX

Thus on they wallow'd in the bloody mire
Of dead and dying thousands,—some-
times gaining
A yard or two of ground, which brought
them nigher
To some odd angle for which all were
straining;
At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
Which really pour'd as if all hell were
raining
Instead of heaven, they stumbled back-
wards o'er
A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore.

XXI

Though 'twas Don Juan's first of fields,
and though
The nightly muster and the silent march
In the chill dark, when courage does not
glow
So much as under a triumphal arch,
Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or
throw
A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as
starch,
Which stiffen'd heaven) as if he wish'd for
day;—
Yet for all this he did not run away.

XXII

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
There *have been* and *are* heroes who
begun
With something not much better, or as
bad:
Frederick the Great from Molwitz
deign'd to run,
For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after
one
Warm bout are broken in to their new
tricks,
And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

XXIII

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*;—
(The antiquarians who can settle time,
Which settles all things, Roman, Greek,
or Runic,
Swear that Pat's language sprung from the
same clime
With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian
tunic
Of Dido's alphabet; and this is rational
As any other notion, and not national);—

XXIV

But Juan was quite 'a broth of a boy,'
A thing of impulse and a child of song;
Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem
wrong),

And afterward, if he must needs destroy,
In such good company as always throng
To battles, sieges, and that kind of
pleasure,
No less delighted to employ his leisure;

XXV

But always without malice: if he warr'd
Or loved, it was with what we call 'the
best
Intentions,' which form all mankind's
trump card,
To be produced when brought up to the
test.
The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer—ward
Off each attack, when people are in quest
Of their designs, by saying they *meant*
well;
'Tis pity 'that such meaning should pave
hell.'

XXVI

I almost lately have begun to doubt
Whether hell's pavement—if it be so
paved—
Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
Not by the numbers good intent hath
saved,
But by the mass who go below without
Those ancient good intentions, which
once shaved
And smooth'd the brimstone of that street
of hell
Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall
Mall.

XXVII

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft
divides
Warrior from warrior in their grim
career,
Like chastest wives from constant hus-
bands' sides
Just at the close of the first bridal year,
By one of those odd turns of Fortune's
tides,
Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
He found himself alone, and friends retir-
ing.

XXVIII

I don't know how the thing occur'd—it
might
Be that the greater part were kill'd or
wounded,
And that the rest had faced unto the right
About; a circumstance which has con-
founded
Cæsar himself, who, in the very sight
Of his whole army, which so much
abounded
In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield,
And rally back his Romans to the field.

XXXIX

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and
 was
 No Cæsar, but a fine young lad, who
 fought
 He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
 Stopp'd for a minute, as perhaps he
 ought
 For a much longer time; then, like an ass
 (Start not, kind reader, since great
 Homer thought
 This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
 Perhaps may find it better than a new
 one);

XXX

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
 And, what was stranger, never look'd
 behind;
 But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
 Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
 Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
 He stumbled on, to try if he could find
 A path, to add his own slight arm and
 forces
 To corps, the greater part of which were
 corpses.

XXXI

Perceiving then no more the commandant
 Of his own corps, nor even the corps,
 which had
 Quite disappear'd—the gods know how!
 (I can't
 Account for everything which may look
 bad

In history; but we at least may grant
 It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
 In search of glory, should look on before,
 Nor care a pinch of snuff about his
 corps:)—

XXXII

Perceiving nor commander nor com-
 manded,
 And left at large, like a young heir, to
 make
 His way to—where he knew not—single-
 handed;
 As travellers follow over bog and brake
 An 'ignis fatuus'; or as sailors stranded
 Unto the nearest hut themselves betake;
 So Juan, following honour and his nose,
 Rush'd where the thickest fire announced
 most foes.

XXXIII

He knew not where he was, nor greatly
 cared,
 For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
 Fill'd as with lightning—for his spirit
 shared
 The hour, as is the case with lively
 brains;

DON JUAN

And where the hottest fire was seen and
 heard,
 And the loud cannon peal'd his hoarsest
 strains,
 He rush'd, while earth and air were sadly
 shaken
 By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

XXXIV

And as he rush'd along, it came to pass he
 Fell in with what was late the second
 column,
 Under the orders of the General Lascy,
 But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
 Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
 Of heroism, and took his place with
 solemn
 Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant
 faces
 And level'd weapons still against the
 glaxis.

XXXV

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
 Who had 'retreated,' as the phrase is
 when
 Men run away much rather than go
 through
 Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
 But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
 Knew when and how 'to cut and come
 again,'
 And never ran away, except when running
 Was nothing but a valorous kind of cun-
 ning.

XXXVI

And so, when all his corps were dead or
 dying,
 Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose
 More virgin valour never dreamt of flying,
 From ignorance of danger, which in-
 duces
 Its votaries, like innocence relying
 On its own strength, with careless
 nerves and thews,—
 Johnson retired a little, just to rally
 Those who catch cold in 'shadows of
 death's valley.'

XXXVII

And there, a little shelter'd from the shot,
 Which rain'd from bastion, battery,
 parapet,
 Rampart, wall, casement, house—for there
 was not
 In this extensive city, sore beset
 By Christian soldiery, a single spot
 Which did not combat like the devil, as
 yet,—
 He found a number of Chasseurs, all
 scatter'd
 By the resistance of the chase they batter'd.

XXXVIII

And these he call'd on; and, what's
 strange, they came
 Unto his call, unlike 'the spirits from
 The vasty deep,' to whom you may ex-
 claim,

Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave
 their home.

Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
 At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
 And that odd impulse, which in wars or
 creeds
 Makes men, like cattle, follow him who
 leads.

XXXIX

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
 And though his name, than Ajax or
 Achilles,
 Sounds less harmonious, underneath the
 sun soon

We shall not see his likeness: he could
 kill his

Man quite as quietly as blows the monsoon
 Her steady breath (which some months
 the same *still* is):

Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle,
 And could be very busy without bustle;

XL

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
 Upon reflection, knowing that behind
 He would find others who would fain be
 rid so

Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
 Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their
 lids so

Of't are soon closed, all heroes are not
 blind,

But when they light upon immediate
 death,

Retire a little, merely to take breath.

XLI

But Johnson only ran off, to return
 With many other warriors, as we said,
 Unto that rather somewhat misty bourne,
 Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
 To Jack, howe'er, this gave but slight con-
 cern:

His soul (like galvanism upon the dead)
 Acted upon the living as on wire,
 And led them back into the heaviest fire.

XLII

Egad! they found the second time what
 they

The first time thought quite terrible
 enough

To fly from, malgré all which people say
 Of glory, and all that immortal stuff
 Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
 That daily shilling which makes war-
 riors tough)—

They found on their return the self-same
 welcome,
 Which made some *think*, and others *know*,
 a hell come.

XLIII

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
 Grass before scythes, or corn below the
 sickle,

Proving that trite old truth, that life's as
 frail

As any other boon for which men
 stickle.

The Turkish batteries thrash'd them like a
 flail,

Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle

Putting the very bravest, who were knock'd
 Upon the head before their guns were
 cock'd.

XLIV

The Turks behind the traverses and flanks
 Of the next bastion, fired away like
 devils,

And swept, as gales sweep foam away,
 whole ranks:

However, Heaven knows how, the Fate
 who levels

Towns, nations, worlds, in her revolving
 pranks,

So order'd it, amid these sulphury
 revels,

That Johnson, and some few who had not
 scamper'd,

Reach'd the interior talus of the rampart.

XLV

First one or two, then five, six, and a
 dozen

Came mounting quickly up, for it was
 now

All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
 Flame was shower'd forth above, as
 well's below,

So that you scarce could say who best had
 chosen,

The gentlemen that were the first to show
 Their martial face: on the parapet,

Or those who thought it brave to wait as
 yet.

XLVI

But those who scaled found out that their
 advance

Was favour'd by an accident or blunder:
 The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's igno-
 rance

Had palisado'd in a way you'd wonder
 To see in forts of Netherlands or France—

(Though these to our Gibraltar must
 knock under)—

Right in the middle of the parapet
 Just named, these palisades were primly
 set:

XLVII

So that on either side some nine or ten
 Paces were left, whereon you could contrive
 To march; a great convenience to our men,
 At least to all those who were left alive,
 Who thus could form a line and fight again;
 And that which further aided them to strive
 Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
 Which scarcely rose much higher than
 grass blades.

XLVIII

Among the first—I will not say the *first*,
 For such precedence upon such occasions
 Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
 Out between friends as well as allied
 nations:
 The Briton must be bold who really durst
 Put to such trial John Bull's partial
 patience,
 As say that Wellington at Waterloo
 Was beaten,—though the Prussians say so
 too;—

XLIX

And that if Blücher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
 And God knows who besides in 'au'
 and 'ow,'
 Had not come up in time to cast an awe
 Into the hearts of those who fought till
 now
 As tigers combat with an empty craw,
 The Duke of Wellington had ceased to
 show
 His orders, also to receive his pensions;
 Which are the heaviest that our history
 mentions.

L

But never mind;—'God save the king!'
 and *kings!*
 For if *he* don't, I doubt if *men* will
 longer—
 I think I hear a little bird, who sings
 The people by and by will be the
 stronger:
 The veriest jaded will wince whose harness
 wrings
 So much into the raw as quite to wrong
 her
 Beyond the rules of posting,—and the mob
 At last fall sick of imitating Job.

LI

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and
 then,
 Like David, flings smooth pebbles
 'gainst a giant;
 At last it takes to weapons such as men
 Snatch when despair makes human
 hearts less painful.

Then comes the 'tug of war';—'twill come
 again,
 I rather doubt; and I would fain say 'fie
 on 't,'
 If I had not perceived that revolution
 Alone can save the earth from hell's pollu-
 tion.

LII

But to continue:—I say not *the first*,
 But of the first, our little friend Don
 Juan,
 Walk'd o'er the walls of Ismail, as if
 nursed
 Amidst such scenes—though this was
 quite a new one
 To him, and I should hope to *most*. The
 thirst
 Of glory, which so pierces through and
 through one,
 Pervaded him—although a generous crea-
 ture,
 As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

LIII

And here he was—who upon woman's
 breast,
 Even from a child, felt like a child;
 howe'er
 The man in all the rest might be confest,
 To him it was Elysium to be there;
 And he could even withstand that awk-
 ward test
 Which Rousseau points out to the
 dubious fair,
 'Observe your lover when he *leaves* your
 arms';
 But Juan never *left* them while they had
 charms,

LIV

Unless compell'd by fate, or wave, or
 wind,
 Or near relations, who are much the
 same.
 But *here* he was!—where each tie that can
 bind
 Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
 And *he* whose very body was all mind,
 Flung here by fate or circumstance,
 which tame
 The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
 Dash'd on like a spur'd blood-horse in a
 race.

LV

So was his blood stirr'd while he found
 resistance,
 As is the hunter's at the five-bar gate.
 Or double post and rail, where the exis-
 tence
 Of Britain's youth depends upon their
 weight,

DON JUAN

[CANTO VIII]

The lightest being the safest: at a distance
He hated cruelty, as all men hate
Blood, until heated—and even then his
own
At times would curdle o'er some heavy
groan.

LVI

The General Lascy, who had been hard
press'd,
Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
As were some hundred youngsters all
abreast,
Who came as if just dropp'd down from
the moon,
To Juan, who was nearest him, address'd
His thanks, and hopes to take the city
soon,
Not reckoning him to be a 'base Bezonian'
(As Pistol calls it), but a young Livonian.

LVII

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
In answer made an inclination to
The general who held him in command;
For seeing one with ribands, black and
blue,
Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in
hand,
Addressing him in tones which seem'd to
thank,
He recognised an officer of rank.

LVIII

Short speeches pass between two men who
speak
No common language; and besides, in
time
Of war and taking towns, when many a
shriek
Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a
crime
Is perpetrated ere a word can break
Upon the ear, and sounds of horror
chime
In like church-bells, with sigh, howl,
groan, yell, prayer,
There cannot be much conversation there.

LIX

And therefore all we have related in
Two long octaves, pass'd in a little
minute;
But in the same small minute, every sin
Contrived to get itself comprised with-
in it.
The very cannon, deafen'd by the din,
Grew dumb, for you might almost hear
a linnet,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general
noise
Of human nature's agonising voice!

LX

The town was enter'd. Oh eternity!—
'God made the country, and man made
the town,'
So Cowper says—and I begin to be
Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,
All walls men know, and many never
known;
And pondering on the present and the
past,
To deem the woods shall be our home at
last:—

LXI

Of all men, saving Sylla the man-slayer,
Who passes for in life and death most
lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, back-woodsman of
Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals anywhere,
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

LXII

Crime came not near him—she is not the
child
Of solitude; Health shrank not from
him—for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
Where if men seek her not, and death be
more
Their choice than life, forgive them, as
beguiled
By habit to what their own hearts
abhor—
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to
ninety;

LXIII

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the
throng,
Not only famous, but of that *good* fame
Without which glory's but a tavern
song—
Simple, serene, the *antipodes* of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge
with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of Nature, or the Man of Ross run wild.

LXIV

'Tis true he shrank from men even of his
nation,
When they built up unto his darling
trees,—
He moved some hundred miles off, for a
station
Where there were fewer houses and
more ease;

The inconvenience of civilisation

Is, that you neither can be pleased nor
 please;
 But where he met the individual man,
 He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.

LXV

He was not all alone: around him grew
 A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
 Whose young, unawaken'd world was
 ever new,
 Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a
 trace
 On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you
 view
 A frown on Nature's or on human face;
 The free-born forest found and kept them
 free,
 And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot
 were they,
 Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abor-
 tions,
 Because their thoughts had never been the
 prey
 Of care or gain: the green woods were
 their portions;
 Nosinking spirits told them they grew grey,
 No fashion made them apes of her dis-
 tortions;
 Simple they were, not savage; and their
 rifles,
 Though very true, were not yet used for
 trifles.

LXVII

Motion was in their days, rest in their
 slumbers,
 And cheerfulness the handmaid of their
 toil;
 Nor yet too many nor too few their
 numbers;
 Corruption could not make their hearts
 her soil;
 The lust which stings, the splendour which
 encumbers,
 With the free foresters divide no spoil;
 Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
 Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII

So much for Nature:—by way of variety,
 Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
 And the sweet consequence of large
 society,
 War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,
 The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
 The millions slain by soldiers for their
 ration,
 The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at
 three-score,
 With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX

The town was enter'd: first one column
 made
 Its sanguinary way good—then another;
 The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
 Clash'd 'gainst the scimitar, and babe
 and mother
 With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to
 upbraid:—
 Still closer sulphury clouds began to
 smother
 The breath of morn and man, where foot
 by foot
 The madden'd Turks their city still dis-
 pute.

LXX

Koutousow, he who afterwards beat back
 (With some assistance from the frost
 and snow)
 Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
 It happen'd was himself beat back just
 now:
 He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
 His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
 Though life, and death, and victory were
 at stake;
 But here it seem'd his jokes had ceased to
 take:

LXXI

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
 Follow'd in haste by various grenadiers,
 Whose blood the puddle greatly did en-
 rich,
 He climb'd to where the parapet ap-
 pears;
 But there his project reach'd its utmost
 pitch
 ('Mongst other deaths the General
 Ribaupierre's
 Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
 Threw them all down into the ditch again.

LXXII

And had it not been for some stray troops
 landing
 They knew not where, being carried by
 the stream
 To some spot, where they lost their under-
 standing,
 And wander'd up and down as in a
 dream,
 Until they reach'd, as daybreak was ex-
 panding,
 That which a portal to their eyes did
 seem,—
 The great and gay Koutousow might have
 lain
 Where three parts of his column yet re-
 main.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VIII

LXXXIII

And scrambling round the rampart, these
same troops,
After the taking of the 'Cavalier,'
Just as Koutousow's most 'forlorn' of
'hopes'
Took, like chameleons, some slight
tinge of fear,
Open'd the gate call'd 'Kilia,' to the groups
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thaw'd into a marsh of human blood.

LXXXIV

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cos-
sacques—
(I don't much pique myself upon ortho-
graphy,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics, and geo-
graphy)—
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order,—were all cut to pieces.

LXXXV

Their column, though the Turkish bat-
teries thunder'd
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reach'd
the rampart,
And naturally thought they could have
plunder'd
The city, without being further ham-
per'd;
But as it happens to brave men, they
blunder'd—
The Turks at first pretended to have
scamper'd,
Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion
corners,
From whence they sallied on those Chris-
tian scorners.

LXXXVI

Then being taken by the tail—a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers—these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was
breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short
lease—
But perish'd without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heap'd car-
casses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
March'd with the brave battalion of Po-
louzki:—

LXXXVII

This valiant man kill'd all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans, who would
not yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.

The walls were won, but 'twas an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause
to mourn:
'Twas blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor t' other finch.

LXXXVIII

Another column also suffer'd much:—
And here we may remark with the his-
torian,
You should but give few cartridges to such
Troops as are meant to march with
greatest glory on:
When matters must be carried by the touch
Of the bright bayonet, and they all
should hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for
existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

LXXXIX

A junction of the General Meknop's men
(Without the General, who had fallen
some time
Before, being badly seconded just then)
Was made at length with those who
dared to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again;
And though the Turks' resistance was
sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.

LXXX

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers
Among the foremost, offer'd him good
quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,
A savage sort of military martyr.
An English naval officer, who wish'd
To make him prisoner, was also dish'd:

LXXXI

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead;
On which the rest, without more intermis-
sion,
Began to lay about with steel and lead—
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions: not a single head
Was spared;—three thousand Moslems
perish'd here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

LXXXII

The city's taken—only part by part—
And death is drunk with gore: there's
not a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate
heart
For those for whom it soon shall cease
to beat.

Here War forgot his own destructive art
In more destroying Nature; and the heat
Of carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden
slime,
Engender'd monstrous shapes of every
crime.

LXXXIII

A Russian officer, in martial tread
Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
Seized fast, as if 'twere by the serpent's
head
Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed
to feel:
In vain he kick'd, and swore, and writhed,
and bled,
And howl'd for help as wolves do for a
meal—
The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
As do the subtle snakes described of old.

LXXXIV

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
Of a foe o'er him, snatch'd at it, and bit
The very tendon which is most acute—
(That which some ancient Muse or
modern wit
Named after thee, Achilles) and quite
through't
He made the teeth meet, nor relin-
quish'd it
Even with his life—for (but they lie) 'tis
said
To the live leg still clung the sever'd head.

LXXXV

However this may be, 'tis pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a
skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and
maim'd:
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be
blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then
let go.

LXXXVI

But then the fact's a fact—and 'tis the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction
Where'er he can; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the re-
striction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes call'd poetic
diction
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Satan angles with for souls, like
flies.

LXXXVII

The city's taken, but not render'd!—No!
There's not a Moslem that hath yielded
sword:
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's
flow
Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor
word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or
foe:
In vain the yell of victory is roar'd
By the advancing Muscovite—the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavish'd every-
where,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
When the stripp'd forest bows to the
bleak air,
And groans; and thus the peopled city
grieves,
Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left
bare;
But still it falls in vast and awful splinters,
As oaks blown down with all their thou-
sand winters.

LXXXIX

It is an awful topic—but 'tis not
My cue for any time to be terrific:
For checker'd as is seen our human lot
With good, and bad, and worse, alike
prolific
Of melancholy merriment, to quote
Too much of one sort would be sopo-
rific;—
Without, or with, offence to friends or
foes,
I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC

And one good action in the midst of crimes
Is 'quite refreshing,' in the affected
phrase
Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
With all their pretty milk-and-water
ways,
And may serve therefore to bedew these
rhymes,
A little scorch'd at present with the blaze
Of conquest and its consequences, which
Make epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
Thousands of slaughter'd men, a yet
warm group
Of murder'd women, who had found their
way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart
droop

DON JUAN

[CANTO VII]

And shudder;—while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies full'd in bloody rest.

XCII

Two villainous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons:
match'd with them,
The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
Has feelings pure and polish'd as a gem,—
The bear is civilised, the wolf is mild:
And whom for this at last must we condemn?
Their natures? or their sovereigns, who employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy?

XCIII

Their sabres glitter'd o'er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with
affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead:
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight,
I shall not say exactly what he said,
Because it might not solace 'ears polite';
But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

XCIV

One's hip he slash'd, and split the other's shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
If there might be chirurgeons who could solder
The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain; while waxing colder
As he turn'd o'er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

XCV

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race;
For the same blow which laid her mother here
Had scarr'd her brow, and left its crimson trace,
As the last link with all she had held dear;
But else unhurt, she open'd her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise.

XCVI

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fix'd
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear,
mix'd
With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
Unto his protégée; while hers, transfix'd
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase;—

XCVII

Upcame John Johnson (I will not say 'Jack,'
For that were vulgar, cold, and commonplace
On great occasions, such as an attack
On cities, as hath been the present case):
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
Exclaiming—'Juan! Juan! On, boy! brace
Your arm, and I'll bet Moscow to a dollar,
That you and I will win St. George's collar.

XCVIII

'The Seraskier is knock'd upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the din
Of our artillery and his own: 'tis said
Our kill'd, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX

'Then up with me!'—But Juan answer'd,
'Look
Upon this child—I saved her—must not leave
Her life to chance; but point me out some nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,
And I am with you.'—Whereon Johnson took
A glance around—and shrugg'd—and twitch'd his sleeve
And black silk neckcloth—and replied,
'You're right;
Poor thing! what's to be done? I'm puzzled quite.'

C

Said Juan—'Whatsoever is to be
Done, I'll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we.'—
Quoth Johnson—'Neither will I quite insure;

But at the least *you* may die gloriously.'—
 Juan replied—'At least I will endure
 Whate'er is to be borne—but not resign
 This child, who is parentless, and therefore
 mine.'

CI

Johnson said—'Juan, we've no time to
 lose;
 The child's a pretty child—a very
 pretty—
 I never saw such eyes—but hark! now
 choose
 Between your fame and feelings, pride
 and pity:—
 Hark! how the roar increases!—no excuse
 Will serve when there is plunder in a
 city:—
 I should be loth to march without you, but,
 By God! we'll be too late for the first cut.'

CII

But Juan was immovable; until
 Johnson, who really loved him in his
 way,
 Pick'd out amongst his followers with
 some skill
 Such as he thought the least given up to
 prey;
 And swearing if the infant came to ill
 That they should all be shot on the next
 day;
 But if she were deliver'd safe and sound,
 They should at least have fifty rubles
 round,

CIII

And all allowances besides of plunder
 In fair proportion with their com-
 rades;—then
 Juan consented to march on through
 thunder,
 Which thinn'd at every step their ranks
 of men:
 And yet the rest rush'd eagerly—no
 wonder,
 For they were heated by the hope of
 gain,
 A thing which happens everywhere each
 day—
 No hero trusteth wholly to half pay.

CIV

And such is victory, and such is man!
 At least nine-tenths of what we call
 so:—God
 May have another name for half we scan
 As human beings, or his ways are odd.
 But to our subject: a brave Tartar khan—
 Or 'sultan,' as the author (to whose nod
 In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
 This chieftain—somehow would not yield
 at all

CV

But flank'd by five brave sons (such is
 polygamy,
 That she spawns warriors by the score,
 where none
 Are prosecuted for that false crime
 bigamy),
 He never would believe the city won
 While courage clung but to a single twig.—
 Am I
 Describing Priam's Peleus', or Jove's
 son?
 Neither—but a good, plain, old, temperate
 man,
 Who fought with his five children in the
 van.

CVI

To take him was the point. The truly brave,
 When they behold the brave oppress'd
 with odds,
 Are touch'd with a desire to shield and
 save;—
 A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
 Are they—now furious as the sweeping
 wave,
 Now moved with pity; even as some-
 times nods
 The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
 Compassion breathes along the savage
 mind.

CVII

But he would *not* be taken, and replied
 To all the propositions of surrender
 By mowing Christians down on every side,
 As obstinate as Swedish Charles at
 Bender.
 His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
 Whereon the Russian pathos grew less
 tender,
 As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
 Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
 Expended all their Eastern phraseology
 In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
 So much less fight as might form an
 apology
 For *them* in saving such a desperate foe—
 He hew'd away, like doctors of theology
 When they dispute with sceptics; and with
 curses
 Struck at his friends, as babies beat their
 nurses.

CIX

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly,
 both
 Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
 The first with sighs, the second with an
 oath,
 Upon his angry sultanish, pell-mell,

DON JUAN

[CANTO VIII]

And all around were grown exceeding wroth
At such a pertinacious infidel,
And pour'd upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain

CX

That drinks and still is dry. At last they
perish'd—
His second son was leuell'd by a shot;
His third was sabred; and the fourth, most
cherish'd
Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
The fifth, who, by a Christian mother
nourish'd,
Had been neglected, ill-used, and what
not,
Because deform'd, yet died all game and
bottom,
To save a sire, who blush'd that he begot
him.

CXI

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
As great a scorner of the Nazarene
As ever Mahomet pick'd out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in
green,
Who make the beds of those who won't
take quarter
On earth, in Paradise; and when once
seen,
Those houris, like all other pretty crea-
tures,
Do just whate'er they please, by dint of
features.

CXII

And what they pleased to do with the
young khan
In heaven I know not, nor pretend to
guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
To tough old heroes, and can do no less;
And that's the cause no doubt why, if we
scan
A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran
body,
You'll find ten thousand handsome cox-
combs bloody.

CXIII

Your houris also have a natural pleasure
In lopping off your lately married men,
Before the bridal hours have danced their
measure,
And the sad, second moon grows dim
Or dull repentance hath had dreary leisure
To wish him back a bachelor now and
then:
And thus your houri (it may be) disputes
Of these brief blossoms the immediate
fruits.

CXIV

Thus the young khan, with houris in his
sight,
Thought not upon the charms of four
young brides,
But bravely rush'd on his first heavenly
night.
In short, howe'er our better faith de-
rides,
These black-eyed virgins make the Mos-
lems fight,
As though there were one heaven and
none besides—
Whereas, if all be true we hear of heaven
And hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV

So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart,
He shouted 'Allah!' and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
And bright eternity without disguise
On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise,
dart:—
With prophets, houris, angels, saints, de-
scribed
In one voluptuous blaze,—and then he died:

CXVI

But with a heavenly rapture on his face,
The good old khan, who long had
ceased to see
Houris, or aught except his florid race
Who grew like cedars round him glori-
ously—
When he beheld his latest hero grace
The earth, which he became like a fell'd
tree,
Paused for a moment from the fight, and
cast
A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopp'd as if once more willing to con-
cede
Quarter, in case he bade them not 'aroynt!'
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of
joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a
reed,
As he look'd down upon his children gone,
And felt—though done with life—he was
alone.

CXVIII

But 'twas a transient tremor:—with a
spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he
flung,
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he
clung

Closer, that all the deadlier they might
wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced
his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound pour'd forth his soul
at once.

CXXIX

'Tis strange enough—the rough, tough
soldiers who
Spared neither sex nor age in their
career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced
through,
And lay before them with his children
near,
Touch'd by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment; though no
tear
Flow'd from their bloodshot eyes, all red
with strife,
They honour'd such determined scorn of
life.

CXX

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief pacha calmly held his
post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ re-
tire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host;
At length he condescended to inquire,
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey
To answer Ribas' summons to give way.

CXXI

In the mean time, cross-legg'd, with great
sang-froid,
Among the scorching ruins he sat
smoking
Tobacco on a little carpet;—Troy
Saw nothing like the scene around;—yet
looking
With martial stoicism, nought seem'd to
annoy
His stern philosophy; but gently strok-
ing
His beard, he puff'd his pipe's ambrosial
gales,
As if he had three lives, as well as tails.

CXXII

The town was taken—whether he might
yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver
bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er
the field,
But red with no redeeming gore: the
glow

Of burning streets, like moonlight on the
water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of
slaughter.

CXXIII

All that the mind would shrink from of
excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's
distresses;
All that the devil would do if run stark
mad;
All that defies the worst which pen ex-
presses;
All by which hell is peopled, or as sad
As hell—mere mortals who their power
abuse—
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

CXXIV

If here and there some transient trait of
pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart
broke through
Its bloody bond, and saved, perhaps, some
pretty
Child, or an aged, helpless man or two—
What's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and
duties grew?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of
Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

CXXV

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchased by all agonies and
crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in after-
times.
Meantime the Taxes, Castlereagh, and
Debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as
rhymes.
Read your own hearts and Ireland's
present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's
glory.

CXXVI

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its
king,
A subject of sublimest exultation—
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation
Strip your green fields, and to your
harvest cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the
throne—
Though Ireland starve, great George
weighs twenty stone.

DON JUAN

[CANTO VII]

CXXXVII

But let me put an end unto my theme;
There was an end of Ismail—hapless
town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er
Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller
scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders
grown:
Offorty thousand who had mann'd the wall,
Some hundreds breathed—the rest were
silent all!

CXXXVIII

In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemora-
tion:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase—
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long
station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste;—they ravish'd
very little.

CXXXIX

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no
less
Might here and there occur some viola-
tion
In the other line;—but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated
nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX

Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the
dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of
taste—
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce
could mark
Their friends from foes,—besides, such
things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grena-
diers.

CXXXI

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there en-
sued
To those who had felt the inconvenient
state
Of 'single blessedness,' and thought it
good

(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning
prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of
bedding.

CXXXII

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long
caged)
'Wherefore the ravishing did not be-
gin!'
But while the thirst for gore and plunder
raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous
sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness—I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII

Suwarrow now was conqueror—a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his
eyes, like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was
scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first de-
spatch;
And here exactly follows what he
said:—
'Glory to God and to the Empress!'
(*Powers*
Eternal! such names mingled!) 'Ismail's
ours.'

CXXXIV

Methinks these are the most tremendous
words,
Since 'Mené, Mené, Tekel,' and 'Uphar-
sin,'
Which hands or pens have ever traced of
swords.
Heaven help me! I'm but little of a
parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the
Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no
farce on
The fate of nations;—but this Russ so
witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning
city.

CXXXV

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and
groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none
forget it—
For I will teach, if possible, the stones

To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
 Be said that we still truckle unto
 thrones;—
 But ye—our children's children! think
 how we
 Show'd *what things were* before the world
 was free!

CXXXVI

That hour is not for us, but 'tis for you.
 And as, in the great joy of your millen-
 nium,
 You hardly will believe such things were
 true
 As now occur, I thought that I would
 pen you 'em;
 But may their very memory perish too!—
 Yet if perchance remember'd, still dis-
 dain you 'em
 More than you scorn the savages of yore,
 Who *painted their bare limbs*, but *not* with
 gore.

CXXXVII

And when you hear historians talk of
 thrones,
 And those that sate upon them, let it be
 As we now gaze upon the mammoth's
 bones,
 And wonder what old world such things
 could see,
 Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
 The pleasant riddles of futurity—
 Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
 As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII

Reader! I have kept my word,—at least so
 far
 As the first canto promised. You have
 now
 Had sketches of love, tempest, travel,
 war,—
 All very accurate, you must allow,
 And *epic*, if plain truth should prove no
 bar;
 For I have drawn much less with a long
 bow
 Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
 But Phœbus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX

With which I still can harp, and carp, and
 fiddle.
 What further hath befallen or may be-
 fall
 The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
 I by and by may tell you, if at all:
 But now I choose to break off in the
 middle,
 Worn out with battering Ismail's stub-
 born wall,
 While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
 For which all Petersburg is on the watch.

CXL

This special honour was conferr'd, be-
 cause
 He had behaved with courage and hu-
 manity—
 Which *last* men like, when they have time
 to pause
 From their ferocities produced by
 vanity.
 His little captive gain'd him some ap-
 plause
 For saving her amidst the wild insanity
 Of carnage,—and I think he was more
 glad in her
 Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

CXLI

The Moslem orphan went with her pro-
 tector,
 For she was homeless, houseless, help-
 less; all
 Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
 Had perish'd in the field or by the
 wall:
 Her very place of birth was but a spectre
 Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's
 call
 To prayer was heard no more! and Juan
 wept,
 And made a vow to shield her, which he
 kept.

CANTO THE NINTH

I

OH, Wellington! (or 'Villainton'—for
 Fame
 Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
 France could not even conquer your great
 name,
 But punn'd it down to this facetious
 phrase—
 Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)
 You have obtain'd great pensions and
 much praise:
 Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
 Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'

II

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite
 well
 In Marinet's affair—in fact 'twas
 shabby,
 And like some other things won't do to tell
 Upon your tomb in Westminster's old
 abbey.
 Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to
 dwell,
 Such tales being for the tea-hours of
 some tabby;
 But though your years as *man* tend fast to
 zero,
 In fact your grace is still but a *young hero*.

III

Though Britain owes (and pays you too)
so much

Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly
more:

You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as
Dutch,

Have seen, and felt, how strongly you

restore;
And Waterloo has made the world your
debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather
better).

IV

You are 'the best of cut-throats':—do not
start;

The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not
misapplied:—

War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting
art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.
If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will
decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Water-
loo?

V

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of
flattery:

They say you like it too—'tis no great
wonder.

He whose whole life has been assault and
battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than
satire, he

May like being praised for every lucky
blunder,

Call'd 'Saviour of the Nations'—not yet
saved,
And 'Europe's Liberator'—still enslaved.

VI

I've done. Now go and dine from off the
plate

Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate

Aslice or two from your luxurious meals:
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people
feels:—

There is no doubt that you deserve your
ration,

But pray give back a little to the nation.

VII

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as
You, my lord duke! is far above re-
flection:

The high Roman fashion; too, of Cincin-
natus,

With modern history has but small con-
nexion:

Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
You need not take them under your
direction;

And half a million for your Sabine farm
Is rather dear!—I'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII

Great men have always scorn'd great
recompenses:

Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and
died,

Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
George Washington had thanks, and

nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few
men's is)

To free his country: Pitt too had his
pride,

And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:

You might have freed fallen Europe from
the unity

Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to
shore:

And *now*—what is your fame? Shall the
Muse tune it ye?

Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts
are o'er?

Go! hear it in your famish'd country's
cries!

Behold the world! and curse your vic-
tories!

X

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,
To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to
inscribe

Truths, that you will not read in the
Gazettes,

But which 'tis time to teach the hireling
tribe

Who fatten on their country's gore, and
debts,

Must be recited—and without a bribe.
You *did* great things: but not being *great*

in mind,
Have left *undone* the *greatest*—and man-
kind.

XI

Death laughs—Go ponder o'er the skele-
ton

With which men image out the unknown
thing

That hides the past world, like to a set sun
Which still elsewhere may rouse a
brighter spring—

Death laughs at all you weep for:—look upon

This hourly dread of all! whose *threat-
en'd sting*

Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:

Mark! how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

Mark! how it laughs and scorns at all you are!

And yet *was* what you are; from *ear to ear*

It *laughs not*—there is now no fleshy bar
So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to *hear*,

But still he *smiles*; and whether near or far
He strips from man that mantle (far more dear

Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,
White, black, or copper—the dead bones will grin.

XIII

And thus Death laughs,—it is sad merriment,

But still it *is* so; and with such example
Why should not Life be equally content

With his superior, in a smile to trample
Upon the nothings which are daily spent

Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample

Than the eternal deluge, which devours
Suns as rays—worlds like atoms—years like hours?

'To be, or not to be? *that is the question*,'
Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.

I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,
Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much passion;

But would much rather have a sound digestion,

Than Buonaparte's cancer:—could I dash on

Through fifty victories to shame or fame,
Without a stomach—what were a good name?

XV

'*O dura ilia messorum!*'—'Oh
Ye rigid guts of reapers!' I translate

For the great benefit of those who know
What indigestion is—that inward fate

Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.

A peasant's sweat is worth his lord's estate:

Let *this* one toil for bread—*that* rack for rent,

He who sleeps best may be the most content.

XVI

'To be, or not to be?'—Ere I decide,
I should be glad to know that which *is being*;

'Tis true we speculate both far and wide,
And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-seeing*;

For my part, I'll enlist on neither side,
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.

For me, I sometimes think that life *is* death,

Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

XVII

'*Que sçais-je?*' was the motto of Montaigne,

As also of the first academicians;

That all is dubious which man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.

There's no such thing as certainty, that's plain

As any of Mortality's conditions;

So little do we know what we're about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;

But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?
Your wise men don't know much of navigation;

And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station

Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers

Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

XIX

'But heaven,' as Cassio says, 'is above all—

No more of this, then, let us pray!' We have

Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,

Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. 'The sparrow's fall

Is special providence,' though how it gave

Offence, we know not; probably it perch'd
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search'd.

XX

Oh! ye immortal Gods! what is theogony?
Oh! thou, too, mortal man! what is philanthropy?

Oh! world, which was and is, what is cosmogony?

Some people have accused me of misanthropy;

And yet I know no more than the mag-
hogany

That forms this desk, of what they
mean; *lykanthropy*
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occa-
sion.

XXI

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have
ne'er

Done anything exceedingly unkind,—
And (though I could not now and then
forbear

Following the bent of body or of mind)
Have always had a tendency to spare.—
Why do they call me misanthrope? Be-
cause
They hate me, not I them:—and here we'll
pause.

XXII

'Tis time we should proceed with our good
poem,—

For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now,—but by and by the Truth will
show 'em

Herself in her sublimest attitude:
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her beauty and her banishment.

XXIII

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours)
Was left upon his way to the chief city
Of the immortal Peter's polish'd boors,
Who still have shown themselves more
brave than witty.

I know its mighty empire now allures
Much flattery—even *Voltaire's*, and
that's a pity.

For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than
that.

XXIV

And I will war, at least in words (and—
should
My chance so happen—deeds), with all
who war

With Thought;—and of Thought's foes
by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants have been and
are.

I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no
bar

To this my plain, sworn, downright de-
testation
Of every despotism in every nation.

XXV

It is not that I adulate the people;
Without *me*, there are demagogues
enough,

And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper
stuff.

Whether they may sow scepticism to reap
hell,

As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;—I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings—from you
as me.

XXVI

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties:—never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and
hearty

Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small
art: he

Who neither wishes to be bound nor
bind,

May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

XXVII

That's an appropriate simile, *that jack-
al*;—

I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins
howl

By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pick-
ings prowl,

And scent the prey their masters would
attack all.

However, the poor jackals are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

XXVIII

Raise but an arm! 'twill brush their web
away,

And without *that*, their poison and their
claws

Are useless. Mind, good people! what I
say—

(Or rather peoples)—*go on* without
pause!

The web of these tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common
cause:

None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX

Don Juan, who had shone in the late
slaughter,

Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of
water;

And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch

O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
 Fair Catherine's pastime—who look'd
 on the match
 Between these nations as a main of cocks,
 Wherein she liked her own to stand like
 rocks.

XXX

And there in a *kibitka* he roll'd on,
 (A curs'd sort of carriage without
 springs,
 Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a
 whole bone,)
 Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
 And orders, and on all that he had done—
 And wishing that post-horses had the
 wings
 Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
 Had feathers, when a traveller on deep
 ways is.

At every jolt—and they were many—still
 He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,
 As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill
 Than he, in these sad highways left at
 large
 Toruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
 Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
 On *her* canals, where God takes sea and
 land,
 Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
 To be the first of what we used to call
 'Gentlemen farmers', a race worn out quite,
 Since lately there have been no rents at all,
 And 'gentlemen' are in a piteous plight,
 And 'farmers' can't raise Ceres from
 her fall:
 She fell with Buonaparte—What strange
 thoughts
 Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

XXXIII

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child
 Whom he had saved from slaughter—
 what a trophy!
 Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled
 With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive
 sophy,
 Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
 And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
 To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the
 sinner!
 Because he could no more digest his
 dinner;—

XXXIV

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
 That *one* life saved, especially if young
 Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
 Far sweeter than the greenest laurels
 sprung

From the manure of human clay, though
 deck'd
 With all the praises ever said or sung:
 Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within
 Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!
 Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily
 scribes!
 Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers,
 illumine us!
 Whether you're paid by government in
 bribes,
 To prove the public debt is not consuming
 us—
 Or, roughly treading on the 'courtier's
 kibes'
 With clownish heel, your popular circulation
 Feeds you by printing half the realm's
 starvation;—

XXXVI

Oh, ye great authors!—*Apropos des
 bottles*.—
 I have forgotten what I meant to say,
 As sometimes have been greater sages'
 lots;—
 'Twas something calculated to allay
 All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:
 Certes it would have been but thrown
 away,
 And that's one comfort for my lost advice,
 Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII

But let it go:—it will one day be found
 With other relics of 'a former world,'
 When this world shall be *former*, under-
 ground,
 Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd,
 and curl'd,
 Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out,
 or drown'd,
 Like all the worlds before, which have
 been hurl'd
 First out of, and then back again to chaos,
 The superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII

So Cuvier says:—and then shall come
 again
 Unto the new creation, rising out
 From our old crash, some mystic, ancient
 strain
 Of things destroy'd and left in airy
 doubt;
 Like to the notions we now entertain
 Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
 Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say
 miles,
 And mammoths, and your winged croco-
 diles.

XXXX

Think if then George the Fourth should
 be dug up,
 How the new worldlings of the then new
 East
 Will wonder where such animals could
 sup!
 (For they themselves will be but of the
 least:
 Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they
 pup,
 And every new creation hath decreased
 In size, from overworking the material—
 Men are but maggots of some huge
 Earth's burial).

XL

How will—to these young people, just
 thrust out
 From some fresh Paradise, and set to
 plough,
 And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves
 about,
 And plant, and reap, and spin, and
 grind, and sow,
 Till all the arts at length are brought about,
 Especially of war and taxing,—*how*,
 I say, will these great relics, when they
 see 'em,
 Look like the monsters of a new museum!

XLI

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
 'The time is out of joint,'—and so am I;
 I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
 And deviate into matters rather dry.
 I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I
 call
 Much too poetical: men should know
 why
 They write, and for what end; but, note or
 text,
 I never know the word which will come
 next.

XLII

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
 Now pondering:—it is time we should
 narrate.
 I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—
 Now we'll get o'er the ground at a great
 rate.
 I shall not be particular in stating
 His journey, we've so many tours of
 late:
 Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose
 That pleasant capital of painted snows;

XLIII

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;
 A scarlet coat, black facings, a long
 plume,
 Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
 Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,

And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn
 Gorme,
 Of yellow casimere we may presume,
 White stockings drawn uncurdled as new
 milk
 O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

XLIV

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in
 hand,
 Made up by youth, fame, and an army
 tailor—
 That great enchanter, at whose rod's com-
 mand
 Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self
 turns paler,
 Seeing how Art can make her work more
 grand
 (When she don't pin men's limbs in like
 a gaoler),—
 Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
 Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery!

XLV

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;
 His wings subdued to epaulettes; his
 quiver
 Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at
 His side as a small sword, but sharp as
 ever;
 His bow converted into a cock'd hat;
 But still so like, that Psyche were more
 clever
 Than some wives (who make blunders no
 less stupid),
 If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd,
 and
 The empress smiled: the reigning favour-
 ite frown'd—
 I quite forget which of them was in hand
 Just then; as they are rather numerous
 found,
 Who took by turns that difficult command
 Since first her majesty was singly
 crown'd:
 But they were mostly nervous six-foot
 fellows,
 All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
 Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'er-
 theless
 There was a something in his turn of limb,
 And still more in his eye, which seem'd
 to express,
 That though he look'd like one of the
 seraphim,
 There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's
 dress.
 Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,
 And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoï.

XLVIII

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Mo-
monoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*
Or *on*, might dread her majesty had not
room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too
tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of
gloom enough
Along the aspect, whether smooth or
rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that 'high official situation.'

XLIX

Oh, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess
show
His parts of speech; and in the strange
displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no*
meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole glean-
ing.

L

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey—
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be
a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each
day—
That monstrous hieroglyphic—that long
spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castle-
reagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing, some women set a
value on,
Which hovers oft about some married
beauties,
Call'd 'Cavalier servente'? a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too
true 'tis)
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to dis-
close them,
Said—'Lady, I beseech you to *suppose*
them.'

LII

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.
'Twas a high place, the highest in the
nation

In fact, if not in rank! and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair
of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their
holders.

LIII

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retain'd his boyish look be-
yond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like,
the fond
Parisian aspect, which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons—I
have conn'd
The history of divorces, which, though
chequer'd,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV

And Catherine, who loved all things (save
her lord,
Who was gone to his place), and pass'd
for much,
Admiring those (by dainty dames ab-
horr'd)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment: and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoï, who was
such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV

Oh thou '*teterrima causa*' of all '*belli*'—
Thou gate of life and death—thou non-
descript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance, well I
May pause in pondering how all souls
are dipt
In thy perennial fountain: how man *fell* I
Know not, since knowledge saw her
branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he *falls* and
rises
Since, *thou* hast settled beyond all sur-
mises.

LVI

Some call thee '*the worst cause of war*,'
but I
Maintain thou art the *best*: for after all,
From thee we come, to thee we go, and
why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great
and small:
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry
land!

DON JUAN

[CANTO IX

LVI

Catherine, who was the grand epitome
Of that great cause of war, or peace, or
what

You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or
that)—

Catherine, I say, was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plum-
age sat

Victory; and, pausing as she saw him kneel
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor
Forgetting quite the woman (which
composed

At least three parts of this great whole),
she tore

The letter open with an air which posed
The court, that watch'd each look her
visage wore,

Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather
spacious,

Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth
gracious.

LIX

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian sunrise on the main.
These queen'd a moment her ambition's
thirst—

So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:
In vain!—As fall the dews on quenchless
sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's
hands!

LX

Her next amusement was more fanciful;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes,
who threw

Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom
he slew.

Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally
through

Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns
think it best

To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

LXI

The two first feelings ran their course com-
plete,

And lighted first her eye, and then her
mouth:

The whole court look'd immediately most
sweet.

Like flowers well water'd after a long
drouth:—

But when on the lieutenant at her feet
Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth
Almost as much as on a new despatch,
Glanced mildly, all the world was on the
watch.

LXII

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and
truculent,

When *wroth*—while *pleased*, she was as
fine a figure

As those who like things rosy, ripe, and
succulent,

Would wish to look on, while they are in
vigour.

She could repay each amatory look you
lent

With interest, and in turn was wont with
rigour

To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to dis-
count.

LXIII

With her the latter, though at times con-
venient,

Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce

look'd lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.

If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in
ye went,

Your 'fortune' was in a fair way 'to
swell

A man' (as Giles says); for though she
would widow all

Nations, she liked man as an individual.

LXIV

What a strange thing is man! and what a
stranger

Is woman! What a whirlwind is her
head,

And what a whirlpool full of depth and
danger

Is all the rest about her! Whether wed,
Or widow, maid, or mother, she can
change her

Mind like the wind: whatever she has
said

Or done, is light to what she'll say or do;—
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

LXV

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,
To thee both *oh!* and *ah!* belong of right

In love and war) how odd are the con-
nexions

Of human thoughts, which jostle in their
flight!

Just now *yours* were cut out in different
sections:

First Ismail's capture caught your fancy
quite;

Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious
batch;
And *thirdly* he who brought you the des-
patch!

LXVI

Shakespeare talks of 'the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill':
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her
still.

'Tis very true the hill seem'd rather high,
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and
by God's blessing,
With youth and health all kisses are
'heaven-kissing.'

LXVII

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd
up—

And so they fell in love;—she with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for
Cupid's cup

With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or 'black drop,'
Which makes one drunk at once, with-
out the base

Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save
tears) dry.

LXVIII

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love—which, when some sort of
thing above

Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in
fashion,
Or duchess, princess, empress, 'deigns to
prove'

('Tis Pope's phrase) a great longing,
though a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

LXIX

Besides, he was of that delighted age
Which makes all female ages equal—
when

We don't much care with whom we may
engage,

As bold as Daniel in the lions' den,
So that we can our native sun assuage
In the next ocean, which may flow just
then,

To make a *twilight* in, just as Sol's heat is
Quench'd in the lap of the salt sea, or
Thetis.

LXX

And Catherine (we must say thus much
for Catherine),
Though bold and bloody, was the kind
of thing

Whose temporary passion was quite
flattering,

Because each lover look'd a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the *ring*—
Which, being the damn'dest part of matri-
mony,
Seem'd taking out the sting to leave the
honey.

LXXI

And when you add to this, her womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes or gray—
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say:
Napoleon's, Mary's (queen of Scotland),
should

Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or
blue)—

LXXII

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic
figure,

Her plumpness, her imperial condescen-
sion,

Her preference of a boy to men much
bigger

(Fellows whom Messalina's self would
pension),

Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other *extras*, which we need not
mention,—

All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

LXXIII

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,

Except where 'tis a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive
to blend

Itself with beauty's frail inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to
depend;

And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make love the main-spring of the universe.

LXXIV

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving

Of faithful pairs—(I needs must rhyme
with dove,

That good old steam-boat which keeps
verses moving

'Gainst reason—Reason ne'er was hand-
and-glove

With rhyme, but always leant less to im-
proving

The sound than sense) besides all these
pretences

To love, there are those things which
words name senses;

LXXV

Those movements, those improvements in
our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get
out

Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a god-
dess,

For such all women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how
odd is

That fever which precedes the languid
rout

Of our sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

LXXVI

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,
To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christen'd love
canonical,

Because the clergy take the thing in
hand;

The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is, when chaste matrons to their other ties
Add what may be call'd *marriage in dis-
guise*.

LXXVII

Well, we won't analyse—our story must
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust;—
I cannot stop to alter words once writ-
ten,

And the *two* are so mix'd with human dust,
That he who *names one*, both perchance
may hit on:

But in such matters Russia's mighty em-
press

Behaved no better than a common semp-
stress.

LXXVIII

The whole court melted into one wide
whisper,

And all lips were applied unto all ears!
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much
crisper

As they beheld; the younger cast some
leers

On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but
tears

Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX

All the ambassadors of all the powers
Inquired, Who was this very new young
man,

Who promised to be great in some few
hours?

Which is full soon (though life is but a
span).

Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribands, and some thousand
peasants.

LXXX

Catherine was generous,—all such ladies
are:

Love—that great opener of the heart
and all

The ways that lead there, be they near or
far,

Above, below, by turnpikes great or
small,—

Love—(though she had a cursed taste for
war,

And was not the best wife, unless we
call

Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 'tis
better

That one should die, than two drag on the
fetter)—

LXXXI

Love had made Catherine make each
lover's fortune,

Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did im-
portune,

If history, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth; and though grief her old age
might shorten,

Because she put a favourite to death,
Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And stinging, disgrace her sex and sta-
tion.

LXXXII

But when the levée rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'

Ambassadors began as 'twere to hustle
Round the young man with their con-
gratulations.

Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recrea-
tions

It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII

Juan, who found himself, he knew not
how,

A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,

As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd
brow

Nature had written 'gentleman.' He
said

Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a
banner.

LXXXIV

An order from her majesty consign'd
 Our young lieutenant to the genial care
 Of those in office: all the world look'd kind,
 (As it will look sometimes with the first
 stare,
 Which youth would not act ill to keep in
 mind.)
 As also did Miss Protasoff then there,
 Named from her mystic office 'l'Eprouveuse,'
 A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV

With *her* then, as in humble duty bound,
 Juan retired,—and so will I, until
 My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.
 We have just lit on a 'heaven-kissing hill,'
 So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,
 And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
 Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
 To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

CANTO THE TENTH

I

WHEN Newton saw an apple fall, he found
 In that slight startle from his contemplation—
 'Tis said (for I'll not answer above ground
 For any sage's creed or calculation)—
 A mode of proving that the earth turn'd
 round

In a most natural whirl, called 'gravitation';
 And this is the sole mortal who could
 grapple,
 Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

II

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
 If this be true; for we must deem the
 mode
 In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
 Through the then unpaved stars the
 turnpike road,
 A thing to counterbalance human woes:
 For ever since immortal man hath
 glow'd
 With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
 Steam-engines will conduct him to the
 moon.

III

And wherefore this exordium?—Why,
 just now,
 In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
 My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
 And my internal spirit cut a caper:
 And though so much inferior, as I know,
 To those who, by the dint of glass and
 vapour,
 Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
 I wish to do as much by poesy.

IV

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail;
 but for
 The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
 But at the least I have shunn'd the com-
 mon shore,
 And leaving land far out of sight, would
 skim
 The ocean of eternity: the roar
 Of breakers has not daunted my alight,
 trim,
 But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may
 float
 Where ships have foundered, as doth many
 a boat.

V

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
 Of favouritism, but not yet in the
blush:—
 And far be it from my *Muses* to pre-
 sume
 (For I have more than one Muse at a
 push)
 To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
 It is enough that Fortune found him
 flush
 Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those
 things
 Which for an instant clip enjoyment's
 wings.

VI

But soon they grow again and leave their
 nest.
 'Oh!' saith the Psalmist, 'that I had a
 dove's
 Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!'
 And who that recollects young years
 and loves,—
 Though hoary now, and with a withering
 breast,
 And palsied fancy, which no longer roves
 Beyond its dimm'd eye's sphere,—but
 would much rather
 Sigh like his son, than cough like his
 grandfather?

VII

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows')
 shrink,
 Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
 So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
 Which threatens inundations deep and
 yellow!
 Such difference doth a few months make.
 You'd think
 Grief a rich field which never would lie
 fallow;
 No more it doth, its ploughs but change
 their boys,
 Who furrow some new soil to sow for
 joys.

VIII

But coughs will come when sighs depart—
 and now
 And then before sighs cease; for oft the
 one
 Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
 Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun
 Of life reach'd ten o'clock: and while a glow,
 Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh
 done,
 O'erspreads the cheek which seems too
 pure for clay,
 Thousands blaze, love, hope, die,—how
 happy they!—

IX

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
 We left him in the focus of such glory
 As may be won by favour of the moon
 Or ladies' fancies—rather transitory
 Perhaps; but who would scorn the month
 of June,
 Because December, with his breath so
 hoary,
 Must come? Much rather should he court
 the ray,
 To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X

Besides, he had some qualities which fix
 Middle-aged ladies even more than
 young:
 The former know what's what; while new-
 fledged chicks
 Know little more of love than what is
 sung
 In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play
 tricks)
 In visions of those skies from whence
 Love sprung.
 Some reckon women by their suns or years,
 I rather think the moon should date the
 dears.

XI

And why? because she's changeable and
 chaste.
 I know no other reason, whatsoe'er
 Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,
 May choose to tax me with; which is
 not fair,
 Nor flattering to 'their temper or their taste,'
 As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an
 air:
 However, I forgive him, and I trust
 He will forgive himself;—if not, I must.

XII

Old enemies who have become new friends
 Should so continue—'tis a point of
 honour;
 And I know nothing which could make
 amends.
 For a return to hatred: I would shun her

Like garlic, howsoever she extends
 Her hundred arms and legs, and fain
 outrun her.
 Old flames, new wives, become our bitter-
 est foes—
 Converted foes should scorn to join with
 those.

XIII

This were the worst desertion:—rene-
 gadoes,
 Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
 Would scarcely join again the 'reforma-
 does',
 Whom he forsook to fill the laureate's
 sty:
 And honest men from Iceland to Bar-
 badoes,
 Whether in Caledon or Italy,
 Should not veer round with every breath,
 nor seize
 To pain, the moment when you cease to
 please.

XIV

The lawyer and the critic but behold
 The baser sides of literature and life,
 And nought remains unseen, but much
 untold,
 By those who scour those double vales
 of strife.
 While common men grow ignorantly old,
 The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's
 knife,
 Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
 And with it all the process of digestion.

XV

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
 And that's the reason he himself 's so
 dirty!
 The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
 Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
 Retains the sable stains of the dark
 creeper,
 At least some twenty-nine do out of
 thirty,
 In all their habits;—not so you, I own;
 As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your
 gown.

XVI

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
 Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted
 foe
 (As far as rhyme and criticism combine
 To make such puppets of us things
 below),
 Are over: Here's a health to 'Auld Lang
 Syne!'
 I do not know you, and may never know
 Your face—but you have acted on the
 whole
 Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII

And when I use the phrase of 'Auld Lang Syne!'

'Tis not address'd to you—the more's the pity

For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in
your proud city.

But somehow—it may seem a schoolboy's
whine,

And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my
head,—

XVIII

As 'Auld Lang Syne' brings Scotland, one
and all,

Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue
hills, and clear streams,

The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's *black*
wall,

All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own
pall,

Like Banquo's offspring:—floating past
me seems

My childhood in this childishness of mine;
I care not—'tis a glimpse of 'Auld Lang Syne.'

XIX

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and
curly,

I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
Which must be own'd was sensitive and
surlly,

Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings
fresh and early:

I 'scotch'd not kill'd' the Scotchman in my
blood,

And love the land of 'mountain and of
flood.'

XX

Don Juan, who was real, or ideal,—
For both are much the same, since what
men think

Exists when the once thinkers are less real
Than what they thought, for mind can
never sink,

And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;
And yet 'tis very puzzling on the brink
Of what is call'd eternity, to stare,

And know no more of what is *here*, than
there;—

XXI

Don Juan grew a very polish'd Russian—
How we won't mention, *why* we need
not say:

Few youthful minds can stand the strong
concussion

Of any slight temptation in their way;

But *his* just now were spread as is a cushion
Smooth'd for a monarch's seat of
honour: gay

Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII

The favour of the empress was agreeable;
And though the duty wax'd a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be
able

To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree,
able

For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII

About this time, as might have been antici-
pated,

Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only
tramples

On our fresh feelings, but—as being par-
ticipated

With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity—must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV

This we pass over. We will also pass
The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!

A young lieutenant's with a *not old* queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was
In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.

Sovereigns may sway materials, but not
matter,

And wrinkles, the d—d democrats,
won't flatter.

XXV

And death, the sovereign's sovereign,
though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels,
With his *Agrarian* laws, the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars,
and revels,

To one small grass-grown patch (which
must await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor
devils

Who never had a foot of land till now,—
Death's a reformer, all men must allow.

XXVI

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and
furry—

Which (though I hate to say a thing
that's bitter)

Peep out sometimes, when things are in a
hurry,
 Through all the 'purple and fine linen,'
 fitter
 For Babylon's than Russia's royal har-
 lot—
 And neutralise her outward show of
 scarlet.

XXVII

And this same state we won't describe: we
 would
 Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollec-
 tion;
 But getting nigh grim Dante's 'obscure
 wood,'
 That horrid equinox, that hateful section
 Of human years, that half-way house, that
 rude
 Hut, whence wise travellers drive with
 circumspection
 Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary
 frontier
 Of age, and looking back to youth, give
one tear;—

XXVIII

I won't describe,—that is, if I can help
 Description; and I won't reflect,—that
 is,
 If I can stave off thought, which—as a
 whelp
 Clings to its teat—sticks to me through
 the abyss
 Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
 Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
 Drains its first draught of lips:—but, as I
 said,
 I *won't* philosophise, and *will* be read.

XXIX

Juan, instead* of courting courts, was
 courted,—
 A thing which happens rarely: this he
 owed
 Much to his youth, and much to his re-
 ported
 Valour; much also to the blood he
 show'd,
 Like a race-horse; much to each dress he
 sported,
 Which set the beauty off in which he
 glow'd,
 As purple clouds befringe the sun; but
 most
 He owed to an old woman and his post.

XXX

He wrote to Spain;—and all his near re-
 lations,
 Perceiving he was in a handsome way
 Of getting on himself, and finding stations
 For cousins also, answer'd the same day.

Several prepared themselves for emigra-
 tions;
 And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
 That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
 Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a
 piece.

XXXI

His mother, Donna Inez, finding, too,
 That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
 Where his assets were waxing rather few,
 He had brought his spending to a hand-
 some anchor,—
 Replied, 'that she was glad to see him
 through
 Those pleasures after which wild youth
 will hanker;
 As the sole sign of man's being in his
 senses
 Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII

'She also recommended him to God,
 And no less to God's Son, as well as
 Mother,
 Warn'd him against Greek worship, which
 looks odd
 In Catholic eyes; but told him, too, to
 smother
 Outward dislike, which don't look well
 abroad;
 Inform'd him that he had a little brother
 Born in a second wedlock; and above
 All, praised the empress's *maternal* love.

XXXIII

'She could not too much give her appro-
 bation
 Unto an empress, who preferr'd young
 men
 Whose age, and what was better still,
 whose nation
 And climate, stopp'd all scandal (now
 and then);—
 At home it might have given her some
 vexation;
 But where thermom:ters sink down to
 ten,
 Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
 Believe that virtue thaw'd before the
 river.'

XXXIV

Oh for a *forty-parson* power to chant
 Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
 Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
 Not practise! Oh for trump of cheru-
 bim!
 Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
 Who, though her spectacles at last grew
 dim,
 Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
 When she no more could read the pious
 print.

XXXV

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
 But went to heaven in as sincere a way
 As anybody on the elected roll,
 Which portions out upon the judgment
 day
 Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of doomsday
 scroll,
 Such as the conqueror William did re-
 pay
 His knights with, lotting others' properties
 Into some sixty thousand new knights'
 fees.

XXXVI

I can't complain, whose ancestors are
 there,
 Erneis, Radulphus—eight-and-forty
 manors
 (If that my memory doth not greatly err)
 Were their reward for following Billy's
 banners:
 And though I can't help thinking 'twas
 scarce fair
 To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*, like
 tanners;
 Yet as they founded churches with the
 produce,
 You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a
 good use.

XXXVII

The gentle Juan flourish'd, though at times
 He felt like other plants call'd sensitive,
 Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do
 from rhymes,
 Save such as Southey can afford to give.
 Perhaps he long'd in bitter frosts for climes
 In which the Neva's ice would cease to
 live
 Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
 In royalty's vast arms he sigh'd for beauty:

XXXVIII

Perhaps—but, sans perhaps, we need not
 seek
 For causes young or old: the canker-
 worm
 Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
 As well as further drain the wither'd
 form:
 Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
 His bills in, and however we may storm,
 They must be paid: though six days
 smoothly run,
 The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
 The empress was alarm'd, and her phy-
 sician
 (The same who physick'd Peter) found the
 tick
 Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition

Which augur'd of the dead, however
quick
 Itself, and show'd a feverish disposi-
 tion;
 At which the whole court was extremely
 troubled,
 The sovereign shock'd, and all his medi-
 cines doubled.

XL

Low were the whispers, manifold the
 rumours,
 Some said he had been poison'd by
 Potemkin;
 Others talk'd learnedly of certain tumours,
 Exhaustion, or disorders of the same
 kin;
 Some said 'twas a concoction of the
 humours,
 Which with the blood too readily will
 claim kin;
 Others again were ready to maintain,
 'Twas only the fatigue of last campaign.'

XLI

But here is one prescription out of many:
'Sodæ sulphat. ʒvj. ʒfs. Mannæ optim.
Aq. fervent. f. ʒ ifs. ʒij. tinct. Sennæ
Haustus (and here the surgeon came
 and cupp'd him),
'R. Pulv. Com. gr. iij. Ipecacuanhæ'
 (With more beside if Juan had not
 stopp'd 'em).
'Bolis Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,
Et haustus ter in die capiendus.'

XLII

This is the way physicians mend or end
 us,
Secundum artem: but although we
 sneer
 In health—when ill, we call them to attend
 us,
 Without the least propensity to jeer:
 While that *'hiatus maxime defendendus,'*
 To be fill'd up by spade or mattock,
 's near,
 Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
 We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

XLIII

Juan demurr'd at this first notice to
 Quit; and though death had threaten'd
 an ejection,
 His youth and constitution bore him
 through,
 And sent the doctors in a new direction.
 But still his state was delicate: the hue
 Of health but flicker'd with a faint re-
 flection
 Along his wasted cheek, and seem'd to
 gravel
 The faculty—who said that he must travel.

XLIV

The climate was too cold, they said, for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion;
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

XLV

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation,
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintain'd with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their *uti possidetis*.

XLVI

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferr'd
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kiss'd hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which show'd what great discernment
was the donor's.

XLVII

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means:
But to continue: though her years were waning,
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brook'd no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII

But time, the comforter, will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber:—

Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

XLIX

While this high post of honour's in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You'll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburg:
the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display
once
The fair Czarina's autocratic crest
When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
Was given to her favourite, and now bore
his.

L

A bull-dog, and a bull-finch, and an ermine,
All private favourites of Don Juan;—
for
(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem
mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore
For cats and birds more pendant ne'er
display'd,
Although he was not old, nor even a
maid;—

LI

The animals aforesaid occupied
Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side
Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres in the wide
Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild
Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved, a pure and living
pearl.

LII

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossile
Man, 'midst thy mouldy mammoths,
'grand Cuvier!'
Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle
With this o'erwhelming world, where
all must err:
But she was yet but ten years old, and
therefore
Was tranquil, though she knew not why
or wherefore.

LIII

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as
Nor brother, father, sister, daughter
love.

I cannot tell exactly what it was;
He was not yet quite old enough to
prove

Parental feelings, and the other class,
Call'd brotherly affection, could not
move

His bosom,—for he never had a sister:
Ah! if he had, how much he would have
miss'd her!

LIV

And still less was it sensual; for besides
That he was not an ancient debauchee,
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins'
salt tides,

As acids rouse a dormant alkali,)
Although ('twill happen as our planet
guides)

His youth was not the chastest that
might be,
There was the purest Platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings—only he forgot 'em.

LV

Just now there was no peril of temptation;
Heloved the infant orphan he had saved,
As patriots (now and then) may love a
nation;

His pride, too, felt that she was not
enslaved

Owing to him;—as also her salvation
Through his means and the church's
might be paved.

But one thing's odd, which here must be
inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

'Twas strange enough she should retain
the impression

Through such a scene of change, and
dread, and slaughter;

But though three bishops told her the
transgression,

She show'd a great dislike to holy water:
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess:—
no matter

Whate'er the cause, the church made little
of it—

She still held out that Mahomet was a
prophet.

LVII

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan; whom she seem'd to have
selected

In place of what her home and friends
once were.

He naturally loved what he protected:

And thus they form'd a rather curious
pair,

A guardian green in years, a ward con-
nected

In neither clime, time, blood, with her
defender;

And yet this want of ties made theirs more
tender.

LVIII

They journey'd on through Poland and
through Warsaw,

Famous for mines of salt and yokes of
iron:

Through Courland also, which that
famous farce saw

Which gave her dukes the graceless
name of 'Biron.'

'Tis the same landscape which the
modern Mars saw

Who march'd to Moscow, led by Fame,
the siren!

To lose by one month's frost some twenty
years

Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

LIX

Let this not seem an anti-climax:—'Oh!
My guard! my old guard!' exclaimed
that god of clay.

Think of the Thunderer's falling down
below

Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh!
Alas! that glory should be chill'd by
snow!

But should we wish to warm us on our
way

Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's
flame.

LX

From Poland they came on through
Prussia Proper.

And Königsberg, the capital, whose
vaunt,

Besides some veins of iron, lead, or
copper,

Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper

About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy
millions

Have princes who spur more than their
postillions.

LXI

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and
the like,

Until he reach'd the castellated
Rhine:—

Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye
strike

All phantasies, not even excepting mine!

DON JUAN

[CANTO X

A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and
hover
Upon their airy confines, half-seas-over.

LXI

But Juan posted on through Mannheim,
Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a
spectre
Of the good feudal times for ever gone,
On which I have not time just now to
lecture.

From thence he was drawn onwards to
Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.

LXII

From thence to Holland's Hague and
Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of
ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute
for riches.
Senates and sages have condemn'd its use—
But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems
but cruel.

LXIII

Here he embark'd, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew
half a gale;
High dash'd the spray, the bows dipp'd
in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turn'd somewhat
pale;
But Juan, season'd, as he well might be,
By former voyages, stood to watch the
skiffs,
Which pass'd, or catch the first glimpse of
the cliffs.

LXIV

At length they rose, like a white wall
along
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan
felt—
What even young strangers feel a little
strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky
belt—
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who
sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to
pole
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXV

I've no great cause to love that spot of
earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the
noblest nation;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mix'd regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of trans-
portation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

LXVI

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now through-
out abhorr'd;
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the
sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst
foe,
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once
adored
False friend, who held out freedom to
mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very
mind;—

LXVII

Would she be proud, or boast herself the
free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison,—but the gaoler, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who
wear.

LXVIII

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest
beauties,
Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and
hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate
duties;
Thy waiters running rucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are
booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers unin-
structed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is
deducted.

LXIX

Juan, though careless, young, and
magnifique,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and
credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid
it—

(His Gr Duomo, a smart, subtle
Before him summ'd the awful scroll and
read it):
But, doubtless, as the air, though seldom
sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash,
splash through puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so
merry!
Not like slow Germany, wherein they
muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare; and also pause besides, to
fuddle,
With 'schnapps'—sad dogs! whom
'Hundsfo't', or 'Verflucter,'
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII

Now there is nothing gives a man such
spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a
curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
For the less cause there is for all this
flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
And the great end of travel—which is
driving.

LXXIII

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's
bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone:—
There's glory again for you, gentle reader!
All
Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into these sodas or magnesias,
Which form that bitter draught, the
human species.

LXXIV

The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he
saw
That casque, which never stoop'd except
to Time.
Even the bold Churchman's tomb
excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
O'er kings, who now at least must talk
of law
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And ask'd why such a structure had been
raised;

LXXV

And being told it was 'God's house,' she
said
He was well lodged, but only wonder'd
how
He suffer'd Infidels in his homestead,
The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred
The True Believers;—and her infant
brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should
resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to
swine.

LXXVI

On! on! through meadows, managed like
a garden,
A paradise of hops and high pro-
duction;
For, after years of travel by a bard in .
Countries of greater heat, but lesser
suction,
A green field is a sight which makes him
pardon
The absence of that more sublime con-
struction
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

LXXVII

And when I think upon a pot of beer—
But I won't weep!—and so drive on,
postilions!
As the smart boys spurr'd fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free
millions;
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly
ones,
Who 'kick against the pricks' just at this
juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road!
So smooth, so level, such a mode of
shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings
waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail;—but onward as we
roll,
Surgit amari aliquid—the toll!

LXXIX

Alas! how deeply painful is all payment!
Take lives, take wives, take aught except
men's purses.
As Machiavel shows those in purple
raiment,
Such is the shortest way to general curses.

DON JUAN

[CANTO X

They hate a murderer much less than a
~~claimant~~
 On that sweet ore which everybody
~~nurses.~~
 Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
 But keep your hands out of his breeches
 pocket:

LXXX

So said the Florentine; ye monarchs,
 hearken
 To your instructor. Juan now was
 borne,
 Just as the day began to wane and darken,
 O'er the high hill, which looks with
 pride or scorn
 Toward the great city.—Ye who have a
 spark in
 Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or
 mourn
 According as you take things well or ill;
 Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's
 Hill!

LXXXI

The sun went down, the smoke rose up,
 as from
 A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a
 space
 Which well bescem'd the 'Devil's drawing-
 room,'
 As some have qualified that wondrous
 place:
 But Juan felt, though not approaching
 home,
 As one who, though he were not of the
 race,
 Revered the soil, of those true sons the
 mother,
 Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied
 t'other.

LXXXII

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and
 shipping,
 Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
 Could reach, with here and there a sail
 just skipping
 In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
 Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
 On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
 A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
 On a fool's head—and there is London
 Town.

LXXXIII

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of
 smoke
 Appeared to him but as the magic
 vapour
 Of some alchymic furnace, from whence
 broke
 The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax
 and paper):

The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a
 yoke
 Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a
 taper,
 Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
 Extremely wholesome, though but rarely
 clear.

LXXXIV

He paused—and so will I; as doth a crew
 Before they give their broadside. By
 and by,
 My gentle countrymen, we will renew
 Our old acquaintance; and at least I'll
 try
 To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,
 Because they are so;—a male Mrs.
 Fry,
 With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
 And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV

Oh Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
 Preach to *poor* rogues? And wherefore
 not begin
 With Carleton, or with other houses? Try
 Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.
 To mend the people's an absurdity,
 A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
 Unless you make their betters better:—
 Fy!
 I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI

Teach *them* the decencies of good three-
 score;
 Cure *them* of tours, hussar and high-
 land dresses;
 Tell *them* that youth once gone returns
 no more,
 That hired huzzas redeem no land's
 distresses;
 Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
 Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
 The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
 A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at
 all.

LXXXVII

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too
 late
 On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated,
 sated,
 To set up vain pretences of being *great*,
 'Tis not so to be *good*; and be it stated,
 The worthiest kings have ever loved least
 state;
 And tell them—But you won't, and
 I have prated
 Just now enough; but by and by I'll
 prattle
 Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles'
 battle.

CANTO THE ELEVENTH

I

WHEN Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,

And proved it—'twas no matter what he said:

They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter

Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,

Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II

What a sublime discovery 'twas to make the

Universe universal egotism,

That all's ideal—all *ourselves*! I'll stake the

World (be it what you will) that *that's* no schism:

Oh Doubt!—if thou be'st Doubt, for which some take thee,

But which I doubt extremely—thou sole prism

Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!

Heaven's brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III

For ever and anon comes Indigestion
(Not the most 'dainty Ariel'), and perplexes

Our soarings with another sort of question:

And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,

Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,

Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,

The world, which at the worst's a *glorious* blunder—

IV

If it be chance; or if it be according
To the old text, still better:—lest it should

Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,

As several people think such hazards rude.

They're right; our days are too brief for affording

Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *everybody one day* will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

And therefore will I leave off meta-physical

Discussion, which is neither here nor there:

If I agree that what is, is; then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;

The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical:

I don't know what the reason is—the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI

The first attack at once proved the Divinity

(But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil);

The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;

The third, the usual Origin of Evil;

The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity

On so uncontrovertible a level,

That I devoutly wish'd the three were four
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII

To our theme.—The man who has stood
on the Acropolis

And look'd down over Attica; or he

Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,

Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,

Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance—

But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence?

VIII

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity

Which looks along that vale of good and ill

Where London streets ferment in full activity;

While everything around was calm and still,

Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he

Heard,—and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum

Of cities, that boil over with their scum:—

IX

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,

And lost in wonder of so great a nation,
Gave way to 't, since he could not overcome it.

'And here,' he cried, 'is Freedom's
chosen station;

Here peals the people's voice, nor can
entomb it
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

x

'Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here
people pay
But what they please; and if that things
be dear,
'Tis only that they love to throw away
Their cash, to show how much they
have a year.

Here laws are all inviolate; none lay
Traps for the traveller; every highway's
clear;

Here—he was interrupted by a knife,
With—'Damn your eyes! your money or
your life!'

xi

These freeborn sounds proceeded from
four pads
In ambush laid, who had perceived him
loiter

Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to recon-
noitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who
gads

Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,
May find himself within that isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

xii

Juan, who did not understand a word
Of English, save their shibboleth, 'God
damn!'

And even that he had so rarely heard,
He sometimes thought 'twas only their
'Salâm,'
Or 'God be with you!'—and 'tis not
absurd

To think so: for half English as I am
(To my misfortune), never can I say
I heard them wish 'God with you,' save
that way;—

xiii

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
And being somewhat choleric and
sudden,
Drew forth a pocket-pistol from his
vesture,
And fired it into one assailant's
pudding—

Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
And roar'd out, as he writhed his native
mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
'Oh Jack! I'm floor'd by that 'ere bloody
Frenchman!'

xiv

On which Jack and his train set off at
speed,

And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a
distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,
And offering, as usual, late assistance.
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion
bleed

As if his veins would pour out his exis-
tence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wish'd he had been less hasty with
his flint.

xv

'Perhaps,' thought he, 'it is the country's
wont

To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don't
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.
But what is to be done? I can't allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up; I'll help you with the
load.'

xvi

But ere they could perform this pious
duty,

The dying man cried, 'Hold! I've got
my gruel!

Oh! for a glass of *max*! We've miss'd our
booty;

Let me die where I am!' And as the
fuel

Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and
sooty

The drops fell from his death-wound,
and he drew ill

His breath,—he from his swelling throat
untied

A kerchief, crying 'Give Sal that!'—and
died.

xvii

The cravat stain'd w:th bloody drops fell
down

Before Don Juan's feet: he could not
tell

Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man's
farewell.

Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.

xviii

Don Juan, having done the best he could
In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as 'Crowner's quest' allow'd,
pursued
His travels to the capital apace;—

CANTO XI]

Esteeming it a little hard he should
 In twelve hours' time, and very little
 space,
 Have been obliged to slay a free-born
 native
 In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XX

He from the world had cut off a great man,
 Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
 Who in a row like Tom could lead the
 van,
 Booze in the ken, or at the spellken
 hustle?
 Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow-
 street's ban)
 On the high toby-spice so flash the
 muzzle?
 Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his
 blowing),
 So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so
 knowing?

XX

But Tom's no more—and so no more of
 Tom.
 Heroes must die; and by God's blessing
 'tis
 Not long before the most of them go home.
 Hail! Thamís, hail! Upon thy verge it is
 That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum
 In thunder, holds the way it can't well
 miss,
 Through Kennington and all the other
 'tons,
 Which make us wish ourselves in town at
 once;—

XXI

Through Groves, so call'd as being void of
 trees,
 (Like *lucus* from *no* light); through
 prospects named
 Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to
 please,
 Nor much to climb; through little boxes
 framed
 Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
 With 'To be let,' upon their doors pro-
 claim'd;
 Through 'Rows' most modestly call'd
 'Paradise,'
 Which Eve might quit without much
 sacrifice;—

XXII

Through coaches, drays, choked turn-
 pikes, and a whirl
 Of wheels, and roar of voices, and con-
 fusion;
 Here taverns wooing to a pint of 'purl,'
 There mails fast flying off like a
 delusion;

DON JUAN

There barbers' blocks with periwigs in
 curl
 In windows; here the lamplighter's
 infusion
 Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass
 (For in those days we had not got to
 gas—);

XXIII

Through this, and much, and more, is the
 approach
 Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
 Whether they come by horse, or chaise,
 or coach,
 With slight exceptions, all the ways seem
 one.
 I could say more, but do not choose to
 encroach
 Upon the Guide-book's privilege. The
 sun
 Had set some time, and night was on the
 ridge
 Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge.

XXIV

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of
 Thamís—
 Who vindicates a moment, too, his
 stream—
 Though hardly heard through multi-
 farious 'damme's.'
 The lamps of Westminster's more
 regular gleam,
 The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine
 where fame is
 A spectral resident—whose pallid beam
 In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the
 pile—
 Make this a sacred part of Albion's isle.

XXV

The Druid's groves are gone—so much
 the better:
 Stonehenge is not—but what the devil
 is it?—
 But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
 That madmen may not bite you on a
 visit;
 The Bench too seats or suits full many a
 debtor;
 The Mansion-House, too (though some
 people quiz it),
 To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;
 But then the Abbey's worth the whole
 collection.

XXVI

The line of lights, too, up to Charing
 Cross,
 Pall Mall, and so forth, have a corusca-
 tion
 Like gold as in comparison to dross,
 Match'd with the Continent's illumina-
 tion,

Whose titles Night by no means deigns to
gloss.

The French were not yet a lamp-
lighting nation,
And when they grew so—on their new-
found lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man
turn.

XXVII

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended, may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country-seats;
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of *ignis fatuus* to the mind,
Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and
frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can en-
lighten.

XXVIII

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his *honest*
man,
And found him not amidst the various
progenies
Of this enormous city's spreading spawn,
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his
dodging his
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What I can,
I've done to find the same throughout
life's journey,
But see the world is only one attorney.

XXIX

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,
Through crowds and carriages, but
waxing thinner
As thunder'd knockers broke the long-
seal'd spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early
dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell,—
Don Juan, our young diplomatic
sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some
hotels,
St. James's Palace and St. James's 'Hells.'

XXX

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd
from the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who
abound
In decent London when the daylight's
o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are
found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting mar-
riage.—
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners—and mostly
For those whom favour or whom fortune
swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items
costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or
dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they
pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in
brass.

XXXII

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important,
bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent
o'er.
'Twas merely known, that on a secret
mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our
shore,
Young, handsome, and accomplish'd,
who was said
(In whispers) to have turn'd his sovereign's
head.

XXXIII

Some rumour also of some strange adven-
tures
Had gone before him, and his wars and
loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's
roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a
passion.

XXXIV

I don't mean that they are passionless,
but quite
The contrary; but then 'tis in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or
heart?

XXXV

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placemen, every Russ
credential,
And was received with all the due grimace
By those who govern in the mood
potential,

Who, seeing a handsome stripling with
smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most
essential)
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland
songster.

XXXVI

They err'd, as aged men will do; but by
And by we'll talk of that; and if we
don't,
'Twill be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:—
Now what I love in women is, they
won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to
it.

XXXVII

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy—except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with mis-
anthropy?
She rings the world's 'Te Deum,' and her
brow
Blushes for those who will not:—but
to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,
After the good example of 'Green Erin,'
Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse
for wearing.

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration—
I don't know which was more admired or
less:
One monstrous diamond drew much
observation,
Which Catherine in a moment of '*ivresse*'
(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)
Bestow'd upon him, as the public learn'd;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn'd.

XL

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the
accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,

The clerks,—those somewhat dirty
Of office, or the house of office, fed
By foul corruption into streams,—even
they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay:

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employ'd for, since it is their daily
labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your
next neighbour,
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a
bore),
If he found not in this spawn of taxborn
riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of

XLII

But Juan was received with much '*em-
pressement*':—
These phrases of refinement I must
borrow
From our next neighbour's land, where,
like a chessman,
There is a move set down for joy or
sorrow,
Not only in mere talking, but the press.
Man
In islands is, it seems, downright and
thorough,
More than on continents—as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue
more free.

XLIII

And yet the British '*Damme*'s rather
Attic;
Your continental oaths are but incont-
nent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even
I won't anent
This subject quote; as it would be schis-
matic
In *politesse*, and have a sound affronting
in't;—
But '*Damme*'s quite ethereal, though too
daring—
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at
home;
For true or false politeness (and scarce
that
Now) you may cross the blue deep and
white foam—
The first the emblem (rarely though) of
what

DON JUAN

[CANTO XI

You leave behind, the next of much you
come

To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to unity, like this of mine.

XLV

In the great world,—which, being interpreted,
Meaneth the west or worst end of a
city,
And about twice two thousand people
bred

By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the universe with
pity,—
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by love
or pride)

'Tis also of some moment to the latter:
A rib's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin—and what's still worse,
the trouble.

XLVII

But Juan was a bachelor—of arts,
And parts, and hearts: he danced and
sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any 'flaws or starts,'
Just at the proper time: and though a lad,
Had seen the world—which is a curious
sight,
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded
dames
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the
Thames,
The painting and the painted; youth,
ceruse,
Against his heart prefer'd their usual
claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse;
Daughters admired his dress, and pious
mothers
Inquired his income, and if he had
brothers.

XLIX

The milliners who furnish 'drapery Misses'
Throughout the season, upon speculation

Of payment ere the honeymoon's last

Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlook'd—and gave such
credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and
sigh'd, and paid it.

L

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er
sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest
hue:
They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and
upon its
Late authors ask'd him for a hint or
two;
And which was softest, Russian or
Castilian?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?

LI

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Draw-
cansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to
answer:
His duties warlike, loving, or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippo-
crene,
Which now he found was blue instead of
green.

LII

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm as-
surance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And pass'd for arguments of good
endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith
(Who at sixteen translated 'Hercules
Furens'
Into as furious English), with her best
look,
Set down his sayings in her common-
place book.

LIII

Juan knew several languages—as well
He might—and brought them up with
skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplish'd
belle,
Who still regretted that he did not
rhyme.

There wanted but this requisite to swell
 His qualities (with them) into sublime:
 Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia
 Mannish,
 Both long'd extremely to be sung in
 Spanish.

LIV

However, he did pretty well, and was
 Admitted as an aspirant to all
 The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
 At great assemblies or in parties small,
 He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
 That being about their average numeral;
 Also the eighty 'greatest living poets,'
 As every paltry magazine can show *it's*.

LV

In twice five years the 'greatest living
 poet,'
 Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
 Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
 Although 'tis an imaginary thing.
 Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
 Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be
 king,—
 Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
 The grand Napoleon of the realms of
 rhyme.

LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
 My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean
 seems Cain:
La Belle Alliance of dunces down at zero,
 Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise
 again:
 But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
 Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
 Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
 With turncoat Southey for my turnkey
 Lowe.

LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and
 Campbell
 Before and after: but now grown more
 holy,
 The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
 With poets almost clergymen, or
 wholly:
 And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
 Beneath the very Reverend Rowley
 Powley,
 Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
 A modern Ancient Pistol—by the hilts!

LVIII

Still he excels that artificial hard
 Labourer in the same vineyard, though
 the vine
 Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—
 That neutralised dull Dorus of the
 Nine;

That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;
 That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every
 line:—
 Cambyases' roaring Romans beat at least
 The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.—

LIX

Then there's my gentle Euphues; who,
 they say,
 Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;
 He'll find it rather difficult some day
 To turn out both, or either, it may be.
 Some persons think that Coleridge hath
 the sway;
 And Wordsworth has supporters, two
 or three;
 And that deep-mouth'd Bæotian 'Savage
 Lander'
 Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's
 gander.

LX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one
 critique,
 Just as he really promised something
 great,
 If not intelligible, without Greek
 Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed
 to speak.
 Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
 Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LXI

The list grows long of live and dead pre-
 tenders
 To that which none will gain—or none
 will know
 The conqueror at least; who, ere Time
 renders
 His last award, will have the long grass
 grow
 Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless
 cinders.
 If I might augur, I should rate but low
 Their chances;—they're too numerous,
 like the thirty
 Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd
 but dirty.

LXII

This is the literary *lower* empire,
 Where the prætorian bands take up the
 matter:—
 A 'dreadful trade,' like his who 'gathers
 samphire,'
 The insolent soldiery to soothe and
 flatter,
 With the same feelings as you'd coax a
 vampire.
 Now, were I once at home, and in good
 satire,
 I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
 And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXVI

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
 Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth
 my while
 With such small gear to give myself
 concern:
 Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
 My natural temper's really aught but
 stern,
 And even my Muse's worst reproof's
 a smile;
 And then she drops a brief and modern
 curtsy,
 And glides away, assured she never hurts
 ye.

LXIV

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
 Amongst live poets and blue ladies,
 pass'd
 With some small profit through that field
 so sterile,
 Being tired in time, and neither least
 nor last,
 Left it before he had been treated very
 ill;
 And henceforth found himself more
 gaily class'd
 Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
 The sun's true son, no vapour, but a
 ray.

LXV

His morns he pass'd in business—which
 dissected,
 Was like all business, a laborious
 nothing
 That leads to lassitude, the most infected
 And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal
 clothing,
 And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
 And talk in tender horrors of our
 loathing
 All kinds of toil, save for our country's
 good—
 Which grows no better, though 'tis time
 it should.

LXVI

His afternoons he pass'd in visits,
 luncheons,
 Lounging, and boxing; and the twilight
 hour
 In riding round those vegetable puncheons
 Call'd 'Parks,' where there is neither
 fruit nor flower
 Enough to gratify a bee's slight munch-
 ings;
 But after all it is the only 'bower'
 (In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable
 fair
 Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh
 air.

LXVII

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the
 world!
 Then glare the lamps, then whirl the
 wheels, then roar
 Through street and square fast 'flashing
 chariots hurl'd
 Like harness'd meteors; then along the
 floor
 Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are
 twirl'd;
 Then roll the brazen thunders of the
 door,
 Which opens to the thousand happy few
 An earthly Paradise of *Or Molu*.

LXVIII

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall
 sink
 With the three-thousandth curtsy;
 there the waltz,
 The only dance which teaches girls to
 think,
 Makes one in love even with its very
 faults.
 Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their
 brink,
 And long the latest of arrivals halts,
 'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd
 to climb,
 And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
 Of the good company, can win a corner,
 A door that's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,
 Where he may fix himself like small
 'Jack Horner,'
 And let the Babel round run as it may,
 And look on as a mourner, or a scerner,
 Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
 Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
 Who, like Don Juan, takes an active
 share,
 Must steer with care through all that
 glittering sea
 Of gems and plumes and pearls and
 silks, to where
 He deems it is his proper place to be;
 Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
 Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill,
 Where Science marshals forth her own
 quadrille.

LXXI

Or, if he dance not, but bath higher views
 Upon an heiress or his neighbour's
 bride,
 Let him take care that that which he
 pursues
 Is not at once too palpably descried.

Full many an eager gentleman oft rue
His haste; impatience is a blundering
guide,
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspec-
tion.

LXXII

But, if you can contrive, get next at
supper;
Or if forestall'd, get opposite and
ogle:—
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon memory's
crupper,
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in
vogue! Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single
ball.

LXXIII

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must
pursue,
And watch, and ward; whose plans a word
too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes
such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or
nonsense,
Permits whate'er they please, or *did* not
long since.

LXXIV

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his
ransom,
Before he can escape from so much
danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and 'rack and man-
ger,'
And ugliness, disease, as toil and
trouble;—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV

They are young, but know not youth—it
is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a
sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissi-
pated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth
goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes par-
ticipated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes'
crew;

And having voted, dined, drank, gamed,
and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXVI

'Where is the world?' cries Young, at
eighty—'Where
The world in which a man was born?'
Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past?
'Twas *there*—
I look for it—'tis gone, a globe of glass!
Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely
gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering
mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens,
patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the wind's
wings.

LXXVII

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God
knows:
Where little Castlereagh? The devil
can tell:
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all
those
Who bound the bar or senate in their
spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her
woes?
And where the Daughter, whom the
Isles loved well?
Where are those martyr'd saints the Five
per Cents?
And where—oh, where the devil are the
Rents?

LXXVIII

Where's Brummel? Dish'd. Where's Long
Pole Wellesley? Diddled.
Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's
George the Third?
Where is his will? (That's not so soon
unriddled.)
And where is 'Fum' the Fourth, our
'royal bird'?
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be
fiddled
Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
'Caw me, caw thee'—for six months hath
been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratch-
ing.

LXXIX

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady
That?
The Honourable Mistresses and
Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried
(this is

DON JUAN

[CANTO XI

An evolution oft performed of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts—and
London hisses?

Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd as
usual. Where

My friends the Whigs? Exactly where
they were.

LXXX

Where are the Lady Carolines and Fran-
ceses?

Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye
annals

So brilliant, where the list of routs and
dances is,—

Thou Morning Post, sole record of the
panels

Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill
those channels?

Some die, some fly, some languish on the
Continent,

Because the times have hardly left them
one tenant.

LXXXI

Some who once set their caps at cautious
dukes,

Have taken up at length with younger
brothers:

Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:
Some maids have been made wives,

some merely mothers:
Others have lost their fresh and fairy
looks:

In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but some-
thing strange is

The unusual quickness of these common
changes.

LXXXII

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from
monarchs to

The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century
through.

I knew that nought was lasting, but now
even

Change grows too changeable, without
being new:

Nought's permanent among the human
race,

Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXIII

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite
a Jupiter,

Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician

stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden
look;

But it is time that I should hoist my 'blue
Peter,'

And sail for a new theme:—I have
seen—and shook

To see it—the king hiss'd, and then caressed;
But don't pretend to settle which was
best.

LXXXIV

I have seen the Landholders without a
rap—

I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have
seen

The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-
trap—

I have seen that sad affair of the late
Queen—

I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's
cap—

I have seen a Congress doing all that's
mean—

I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded
asses,

Kick off their burthens—meaning the
high classes.

LXXXV

I have seen small poets, and great prosers,
and

Interminable—not *eternal*—speakers—
I have seen the funds at war with house
and land—

I have seen the country gentlemen turn
squeakers—

I have seen the people ridden o'er like
sand

By slaves on horseback—I have seen
malt liquors

Exchanged for 'thin potations' by John
Bull—

I have seen John half detect himself a
fool.—

LXXXVI

But '*carpe diem*,' Juan, '*carpe, carpe* !'
To-morrow sees another race as gay

And transient, and devour'd by the same
harpy.

'Life's a poor player,'—then 'play out
the play,

Ye villains!' and above all keep a sharp
eye

Much less on what you do than what
you say:

Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you
see.

LXXXVII

But how shall I relate in other cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,

Which 'tis the common cry and lie to
vaunt as

A moral country? But I hold my hand—

For I disdain to write an Atalanta;
But 'tis as well at once to understand
You are *not* a moral people, and you know
it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
My topic, with of course the due
restriction
Which is required by proper courtesy;
And recollect the work is only fiction,
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
Though every scribe, in some slight
turn of diction,
Will hint allusions never meant. Ne'er
doubt
This—when I speak, I *don't hint*, but
speaks out.

LXXXIX

Whether he married with the third or
fourth
Offspring of some sage husband-
hunting countess,
Or whether with some virgin of more
worth
(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial
boundies),
He took to regularly peopling Earth,
Of which your lawful, awful wedlock
fount is,—
Or whether he was taken in for damages,
For being too excursive in his homages,—

XC

Is yet within the unread events of time.
Thus far, go forth, thou lay, which I will
back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,
For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,
By those who love to say that white is
black.
So much the better!—I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts
for a throne.

CANTO THE TWELFTH

Of all the barbarous middle ages, that
Which is most barbarous is the middle
age
Of man! it is—I really scarce know what;
But when we hover between fool and
sage,
And don't know justly what we would be

A period something like a printed page,
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we
were;—

II

Too old for youth,—too young, at thirty-
five,
To herd with boys, or hoard with good
threescore,—
I wonder people should be left alive;
But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
Love lingers still, although 'twere late to
wive:
And as for other love, the illusion's
o'er;
And money, that most pure imagina-
tion,
Gleams only through the dawn of its
creation.

III

O Gold! Why call we misers miserable?
Theirs is the pleasure that can never
pall;
Theirs is the best bower anchor, the chain
cable
Which holds fast other pleasures great
and small.
Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none
at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be
sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each
cheeseparing.

IV

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine
much sicker;
Ambition rends, and gaming gains a
loss;
But making money, slowly first, then
quicker,
And adding still a little through each
cross
(Which *will* come over things), beats love
or liquor,
The gamester's counter, or the states-
man's *dress*.
O Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bank of
vapour.

V

Who hold the balance of the world? Who
reign
O'er congress, whether royalist or
liberal?
Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain?
(That make old Europe's journals
squeak and gibber all).
Who keep the world, both old and new,
in pain
Or pleasure? Who make politics run
glibber all?
The shade of Buonaparte's noble daring?
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-Christian,
Baring.

VI

Then, and the truly liberal Lafitte,
Are the true lords of Europe. Every
Is not a merely speculative hit,
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
Republics also get involved a bit;
Columbia's stock hath holders not
unknown
On 'Change, and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII

Why call the miser miserable? as
I said before: the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise: a hermit would
not miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt wealth's
austerities?
Because, you'll say, nought calls for such
a trial:—
Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII

He is your only poet;—passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap,
displays,
Possess'd, the ore, of which *mere hopes*
allure
Nations athwart the deep: the golden
rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure:
On him the diamond pours its brilliant
blaze,
While the mild emerald's beam shades
down the dyes
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX

The lands on either side are his; the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay,
unloads
For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the
roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
His very cellars might be kings' abodes;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands—the intellectual lord of *all*.

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
To build a college, or to found a race,
A hospital, a church,—and leave behind
Some dome surmounted by his meagre
face:
Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind
Even with the very ore which makes
them base;
Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his
nation,
Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI

But whether all, or each, or none of
May be the hoarder's principle of
action,
The fool will call such mania a disease:—
What is his *own*? Go—look at each
transaction,
Wars, revels, loves—do these bring men
more ease
Than the mere plodding through each
'vulgar fraction'?
Or do they benefit mankind? Lean miser!
Let spendthrifts' heirs inquire of yours—
who's wiser?

XII

How beauteous are rouleaus! how charm-
ing chests
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old victors, all whose heads and
crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their
visage shines,
But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering
cirque confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid
stamp:
Yes! ready money is Aladdin's lamp.

XIII

'Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,
—for love
Is heaven, and heaven is love':—so
sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
Perhaps there may be something in 'the
grove,'
At least it rhymes to 'love:' but I'm
prepared
To doubt (no less than landlords of their
rental)
If 'courts' and 'camps' be quite so senti-
mental.

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and *Cash*
alone:
Cash rules the grove, and fells it too
beside;
Without cash, camps were thin, and
courts were none;
Without cash, Malthus tells you—
'take no brides.'
So *Cash* rules Love the ruler, on his own
High ground, as virgin Cynthia sways
the tides:
And as for 'Heaven being Love,' why not
say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 'tis Matri-
mony.

XV

Is not all love prohibited whatever,
 Excepting marriage? which is love, no
 doubt,
 After a sort; but somehow people never
 With the same thought the two words
 have help'd out.
 Love may exist with marriage, and *should*
 ever,
 And marriage also may exist without;
 But love *sans* banns is both a sin and shame,
 And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI

Now if the 'court,' and 'camp,' and
 'grove,' be not
 Recruited all with constant married men,
 Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
 I say *that* line's a lapsus of the pen;—
 Strange too in my *buon camerado* Scott,
 So celebrated for his morals, when
 My Jeffrey held him up as an example
 To me;—of which these morals are a sample.

XVII

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
 And that's enough; succeeded in my
 youth,
 The only time when much success is
 needed:
 And my success produced what I, in
 sooth,
 Cared most about; it need not now be
 pleaded—
 Whate'er it was, 'twas mine; I've paid,
 in truth,
 Of late, the penalty of such success,
 But have not learn'd to wish it any less.

XVIII

That suit in Chancery,—which some
 persons plead
 In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
 In the faith of their procreative creed,
 Baptize posterity, or future clay,—
 To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
 To lean on for support in any way;
 Since odds are that posterity will know
 No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX

Why, I'm posterity—and so are you;
 And whom do we remember? Not a
 hundred.
 Were every memory written down all true,
 The tenth or twentieth name would be
 but blundered;
 Even Plutarch's Lives have but pick'd out
 a few,
 And 'gainst those few your annalists
 have thunder'd;
 And Mitford in the nineteenth century
 Gives, with Greek truth, the good old
 Greek the lie.

XX

Good people all, of every degree,
 Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
 In this twelfth Canto 'tis my wish to be
 As serious as if I had for inditers
 Malthus and Wilberforce:—the last set
 free
 The Negroes, and is worth a million
 fighters;
 While Wellington has but enslaved the
 Whites,
 And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which
 he writes.

XXI

I'm serious—so are all men upon paper;
 And why should I not form my specula-
 tion,
 And hold up to the sun my little taper?
 Mankind just now seem wrapt in
 meditation
 On constitutions and steam-boats of
 vapour;
 While sages write against all pro-
 creation,
 Unless a man can calculate his means
 Of feeding brats the moment his wife
 weans.

That's noble! That's romantic! For my
 part,
 I think that 'Philo-genitiveness' is—
 (Now here's a word quite after my own
 heart,
 Though there's a shorter a good deal
 than this
 If that politeness set it not apart;
 But I'm resolved to say nought that's
 amiss)—
 I say, methinks that 'Philo-genitiveness'
 Might meet from men a little more forgive-
 ness.

XXIII

And now to business.—O my gentle Juan!
 Thou art in London—in that pleasant
 place,
 Where every kind of mischief's daily brew-
 ing,
 Which can await warm youth in its wild
 race.
 'Tis true, that thy career is not a new one;
 Thou art no novice in the headlong
 chase
 Of early life; but this is a new land,
 Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV

What with a small diversity of climate,
 Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
 I could send forth my mandate like a
 primate
 Upon the rest of Europe's social state;

DON JUAN

[CANTO XII

But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
Great Britain, which the Muse may
penetrate.
All countries have their 'Lions,' but in
these
There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
'*Paulo Majora*. Juan, undecided
Amongst the paths of being 'taken in,'
Above the ice had like a skater glided:
When tired of play, he flirted without sin
With some of those fair creatures who
have prided
Themselves on innocent tentalisation,
And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI

But these are few, and in the end they
make
Some devilish escapade or stir, which
shows
That even the purest people may mistake
Their way through virtue's primrose
paths of snows;
And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
To Balaam, and from tongue to ear
o'erflows
Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note
it)
With the kind world's amen—'Who
would have thought it?'

XXVII

The little Leila, with her Orient eyes,
And taciturn Asiatic disposition,
(Which saw all Western things with small
surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition.)
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII

The women much divided—as is usual
Amongst the sex in little things or great.
Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to
abuse you all—
I have always liked you better than I
state:
Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse
you all
Of being apt to talk at a great rate;
And now there was a general sensation
Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX

In one point only were you settled—and
You had reason; 'twas that a young
child of grace,
As beautiful as her own native land,
And far away, the last bud of her race,

Howe'er our friend Don Juan might com-
mand
Himself for five, four, three, or two
years' space,
Would be much better taught beneath the
eye
Of peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX

So first there was a generous emulation,
And then there was a general competi-
tion,
To undertake the orphan's education.
As Juan was a person of condition,
It had been an affront on this occasion
To talk of a subscription or petition;
But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she
sages,
Whose tale belongs to 'Hallam's Middle
Ages,'

XXXI

And one or two sad, separate wives, with-
out
A fruit to bloom upon their withering
bough—
Begg'd to bring up the little girl, and
'out,'—
For that's the phrase that settles all
things now,
Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
And all her points as thorough-bred to
show:
And I assure you, that like virgin honey
Tastes their first season (mostly if they
have money).

XXXII

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate
dandy,
The watchful mothers, and the careful
sisters,
(Who, by the by, when clever, are more
handy
At making matches, where 'tis gold that
glisters,
Than their *he* relatives), like flies o'er
candy
Buzz round 'the Fortune' with their busy
battery,
To turn her head with waltzing and with
flattery!

XXXIII

Each aunt, each cousin, hath her specula-
tion;
Nay, married dames will now and then
discover
Such pure disinterestedness of passion,
I've known them court an heiress for
their lover.

'*Tantane!*' Such the virtues of high station,
 Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet's
 'Dover!' While the poor rich wretch, object of these
 cares,
 Has cause to wish her sire had had male
 heirs.

XXXIV

Some are soon bagg'd, and some reject
 three dozen.
 'Tis fine to see them scattering refusals
 And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin
 (Friends of the party), who begin
 accusals
 Such as—'Unless Miss (Blank) meant to
 have chosen
 Poor Frederick, why did she accord
 perusals
 To his billets? *Why* waltz with him? *Why*,
 I pray,
 Look *yes* last night, and yet say *no* to-day?

XXXV

'*Why?*—*Why?*—*Besides*, Fred really was
attach'd;
 'Twas not her fortune—he has enough
 without:
 The time will come she'll wish that she
 had snatch'd
 So good an opportunity, no doubt:—
 But the old Marchioness some plan had
 hatch'd,
 As I'll tell Aurea at to-morrow's rout:
 And after all poor Frederick may do
 better—
 Pray did you see her answer to his letter?'

XXXVI

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets
 Are spurn'd in turn, until her turn arrives,
 After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
 Upon the sweepstakes for substantial
 wives;
 And when at last the pretty creature gets
 Some gentleman, who fights, or writes,
 or drives,
 It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected
 To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII

For sometimes they accept some long
 pursuer,
 Worn out with importunity; or fall
 (But here perhaps the instances are fewer)
 To the lot of him who scarce pursued
 at all.
 A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure
 (If 'tis not vain examples to recall)
 To draw a high prize: now, howe'er he got
 her, I
 See nought more strange in this than
 t'other lottery.

XXXVIII

I, for my part—(one 'modern instance'
 more,
 'True, 'tis a pity—pity 'tis, 'tis true')—
 Was chosen from out an amatory score,
 Albeit my years were less discreet than
 few;
 But though I also had reform'd before
 Those became one who soon were to be
 two,
 I'll not gainsay the generous public's
 voice,
 That the young lady made a monstrous
 choice.

XXXIX

Oh, pardon my digression—or at least
 Peruse! 'Tis always with a moral end
 That I dissent, like grace before a feast:
 For like an aged aunt, or tiresome
 friend,
 A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
 My Muse by exhortation means to
 mend
 All people, at all times, and in most places,
 Which puts my Pegasus to these grave
 paces.

XL

But now I'm going to be immoral; now
 I mean to show things really as they are,
 Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
 That till we see what's what in fact,
 we're far
 From much improvement with that
 virtuous plough
 Which skims the surface, leaving scarce
 a scar
 Upon the black loam long manured by
 Vice,
 Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI

But first of little Leila we'll dispose;
 For like a day-dawn she was young and
 pure,
 Or like the old comparison of snows,
 Which are more pure than pleasant to
 be sure.
 Like many people everybody knows,
 Don Juan was delighted to secure
 A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
 Who might not profit much by being at
 large.

XLII

Besides, he had found out he was no tutor
 (I wish that others would find out the
 same),
 And rather wish'd in such things to stand
 neuter,
 For silly wards will bring their
 guardians blame:

DON JUAN

[CANTO XII]

So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor

To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
Consulting 'the Society for Vice
Suppression,' Lady Pinchbeck was his
choice.

XLIII

Olden she was—but had been very young;
Virtuous she was—and had been, I
believe;
Although the world has such an evil
tongue
That—but my chaster ear will not
receive

An echo of a syllable that's wrong;
In fact, there's nothing makes me so
much grieve,
As that abominable tittle-tattle,
Which is the cud eschew'd by human cattle.

XLIV

Moreover I've remark'd (and I was once
A slight observer in a modest way),
And so may every one except a dunce,
That ladies in their youth a little gay,
Besides their knowledge of the world, and
sense
Of the sad consequence of going astray,
Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
Which the mere passionless can never
know.

XLV

While the harsh prude indemnifies her
virtue
By railing at the unknown and envied
passion,
Seeking far less to save you than to hurt
you,
Or, what's still worse, to put you out of
fashion,—
The kinder veteran with calm words will
court you,
Entreating you to pause before you
dash on;
Expounding and illustrating the riddle
Of epic Love's beginning, end, and middle.

XLVI

Now whether it be thus, or that they are
stricter,
As better knowing why they should be so,
I think you'll find from many a family
picture,
That daughters of such mothers as may
know
The world by experience rather than by
lecture,
Turn out much better for the Smithfield
Show
Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
Than those bred up by prudes without a
heart.

XLVII

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talk'd
about—
As who has not, if female, young, and
pretty?
But now no more the ghost of Scandal
stalk'd about;
She merely was deem'd amiable and
witty,
And several of her best *bons-mots* were
hawk'd about:
Then she was given to charity and pity,
And pass'd (at least the latter years of life)
For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
She was the mild reprover of the young,
Whenever—which means every day—
they'd shown
An awkward inclination to go wrong.
The quantity of good she did's unknown,
Or at the least would lengthen out my
song:
In brief, the little orphan of the East
Had raised an interest in her, which
increased.

XLIX

Juan, too, was a sort of favourite with her,
Because she thought him a good heart
at bottom,
A little spoil'd, but not so altogether;
Which was a wonder, if you think who
got him,
And how he had been toss'd, he scarce
knew whither:
Though this might ruin others, it did
not him,
At least entirely—for he had seen too
many
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

L

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
For when they happen at a riper age,
People are apt to blame the Fates, for-
sooth,
And wonder Providence is not more
sage.
Adversity is the first path to truth:
He who hath proved war, storm, or
woman's rage,
Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
Hath won the experience which is deem'd
so weighty.

LI

How far it profits is another matter.—
Our hero gladly saw his little charge
Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up
daughter
Being long married, and thus set at
large,

Had left all the accomplishments she
taught her
To be transmitted, like the Lord
Mayor's barge,
To the next comer; or—as it will tell
More Muse-like—like to Cytherea's shell.

I call such things transmission; for there is
A floating balance of accomplishment,
Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
According as their minds or backs are
bent.

Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the
abyss
Of metaphysics; others are content
With music; the most moderate shine as
wits;
While others have a genius turn'd for fits.

LIII

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, fine arts, or finer stays,
May be the baits for gentlemen or lords
With regular descent, in these our days,
The last year to the new transfers its
hoards;

New vestals claim men's eyes with the
same praise
Of 'elegant' *et cætera*, in fresh batches—
All matchless creatures, and yet bent on
matches.

But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this
I've not begun what we have to go
through.
These first twelve books are merely
flourishes,

Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
About what's call'd success, or not
succeeding:

Such thoughts are quite below the strain
they have chosen;

'Tis a 'great moral lesson' they are
reading.

I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's
pleading,

If that my Pegasus should not be
founder'd,

I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,
Yclept the Great World; for it is the
least,

Although the highest: but as swords have
hilts

By which their power of mischief is
increased,

When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
Thus the low world, north, south, or
west, or east,

Must still obey the high—which is their
handle,

Their moon, their sun, their gas, their
farthing candle.

LVII

He had many friends who had many wives,
and was

Well look'd upon by both, to that extent
Of friendship which you may accept or
pass,

It does nor good, nor harm: being
merely meant

To keep the wheels going of the higher
class,

And draw them nightly when a ticket's
sent;

And what with masquerades, and fêtes,
and balls,

For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII

A young unmarried man, with a good name
And fortune, has an awkward part to
play;

For good society is but a game,
'The royal game of Goose,' as I may
say,

Where everybody has some separate aim,
An end to answer, or a plan to lay—

The single ladies wishing to be double,
The married ones to save the virgins
trouble.

LIX

I don't mean this as general, but particular
Examples may be found of such
pursuits:

Though several also keep their perpendi-
cular

Like poplars, with good principles for
roots;

Yet many have a method more *reticular*—
'Fishers for men,' like sirens with soft
lutes:

For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

LX

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the
mother,

To say her daughter's feelings are tre-
pann'd;

Perhaps you'll have a visit from the
brother,

All strut, and stays, and whiskers, to
demand

DON JUAN

[CANTO XII

What 'your intentions are?'—One way
or other
It seems the virgin's heart expects your
hand:

And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI

I've known a dozen weddings made even
thus,
And some of them high names: I have
also known

Young men who—though they hated to
discuss

Pretensions which they never dream'd
to have shown—

Yet neither frighten'd by a female fuss,
Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they form'd a pair.

LXII

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,
A peril—not indeed like love or
marriage,

But not the less for this to be depreciated:
It is—I meant and mean not to dis-
parage

The show of virtue even in the vitiated—
It adds an outward grace unto their
carriage—

But to denounce the amphibious sort of
harlot,

Couleur de rose, who's neither white nor
scarlet.

LXIII

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say
'No,'

And won't say 'Yes,' and keeps you on
and off-ing

On a lee-shore, till it begins to blow—
Then sees your heart wreck'd with an
inward scoffing.

This works a world of sentimental woe,
And sends new Werters yearly to their
coffin;

But yet is merely innocent flirtation,
Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV

'Ye gods, I grow a talker!' Let us prate.
The next of perils, though I place it
sternest,

Is when, without regard to 'church or state,'
A wife makes or takes love in upright
earnest.

Abroad, such things decide few women's
fate—

(Such, early traveller! is the truth thou
learnest)—

But in old England, when a young bride
errs,

Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to
hers.

LXV

For 'tis a low, newspaper, humdrum, law-
suit

Country, where a young couple of the
same ages

Can't form a friendship, but the world
o'erawes it.

Then there's the vulgar trick of those
d—d damages!

A verdict—grievous foe to those who
cause it!—

Forms a sad climax to romantic
homages;

Besides those soothing speeches of the
pleaders,

And evidences which regale all readers.

LXVI

But they who blunder thus are raw
beginners;

A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid
sinners,

The loveliest oligarchs of our gyno-
cracy;

You may see such at all the balls and
dinners,

Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste—

And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

LXVII

Juan, who did not stand in the predica-
ment

Of a mere novice, had one safeguard
more;

For he was sick—no, 'twas not the word
sick I meant—

But he had seen so much good love
before,

That he was not in heart so very weak;—
I meant

But thus much, and no sneer against the
shore

Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes,
bluer stockings,

Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double
knockings.

LXVIII

But coming young from lands and scenes
romantic,

Where lives, not lawsuits, must be
risk'd for Passion,

And Passion's self must have a spice of
frantic,

Into a country where 'tis half a fashion,
Seem'd to him half commercial, half
pedantic.

Howe'er he might esteem this moral
nation:

Besides (alas! his taste—forgive and pity!)
At *first* he did not think the women pretty.

LXX

I say at *first*—for he found out at *last*,
 But by degrees, that they were fairer far
 Than the more glowing dames whose lot
 is cast
 Beneath the influence of the eastern star.
 A further proof we should not judge in
 haste;
 Yet inexperience could not be his bar
 To taste:—the truth is, if men would confess,
 That novelties *please* less than they
impress.

LXXI

Though travell'd, I have never had the
 luck to
 Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile
 or Niger,
 To that impracticable place Timbuctoo,
 Where Geography finds no one to oblige
 her
 With such a chart as may be safely stuck
 to—
 For Europe ploughs in Afric like '*bos
 piger*';
 But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
 No doubt I should be told that black is
 fair.

LXXII

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
 But I suspect in fact that white is black,
 And the whole matter rests upon eye-
 sight.
 Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll
 attack
 Perhaps this new position—but I'm right;
 Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en
 aback:—
 He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
 Within; and what seest thou? A dubious
 spark.

LXXIII

But I'm relapsing into metaphysics,
 That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
 Construction as your cures for hectic
 phthisics,
 Those bright moths fluttering round a
 dying flame:
 And this reflection brings me to plain
 physics,
 And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
 Compared with those of our pure pearls of
 price,
 Those polar summers, *all* sun, and some
 ice.

LXXIV

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids,
 whose
 Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere
 fishes;—

Not that there's *not* a quantity of those
 Who have a due respect for their own
 wishes.
 Like Russians rushing from hot baths to
 snows
 Are they, at bottom virtuous even when
 vicious;
 They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
 As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXV

But this has nothing to do with their out-
 sides.
 I said that Juan did not think them pretty
 At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
 Half her attractions—probably from
 pity—
 And rather calmly into the heart glides,
 Than storms it as a foe would take a
 city;
 But once *there* (if you doubt this, prithee try)
 She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXVI

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
 Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
 Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
 Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burn-
 ing;
 Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warb-
 le those *bravuras* (which I still am
 learning
 To like, though I have been seven years in
 Italy,
 And have, or had, an ear that served me
 prettily);—

LXXVII

She cannot do these things, nor one or two
 Others, in that off-hand and dashing
 style
 Which takes so much—to give the devil
 his due;
 Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
 Nor settles all things in one interview
 (A thing approved as saving time and
 toil);—
 But though the soil may give you time and
 trouble,
 Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVIII

And if in fact she takes to a *grande
 passion*,
 It is a very serious thing indeed:
 Nine times in ten 'tis but caprice or
 fashion,
 Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,
 The pride of a mere child with a new sash
 on,
 Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed:
 But the *tenth* instance will be a tornado,
 For there's no saying what they will or
 may do.

LXXXVIII

The reason's obvious: if there's an *éclat*,
They lose their caste at once, as do the
Farias;
And when the delicacies of the law
Have fill'd their papers with their com-
ments various,
Society, that china without flaw,
(The hypocrite!) will banish them like
Marius,
To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt:
For Fame's a Carthage not so soon
rebuilt.

LXXXIX

Perhaps this is as it should be;—it is
A comment on the Gospel's 'Sin no
more,
And be thy sins forgiven';—but upon this
I leave the saints to settle their own
score.
Abroad, though doubtless they do much
amiss,
An erring woman finds an opener door
For her return to Virtue—as they call
That lady, who should be at home to all.

LXXXX

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
Knowing that such uneasy virtue leads
People some ten times less in fact to mind
it,
And care but for discoveries, and not
deeds.
And as for chastity, you'll never bind it
By all the laws the strictest lawyer
pleads,
But aggravate the crime you have not
prevented,
By rendering desperate those who had
else repented.

LXXXXI

But Juan was no casuist, nor had ponder'd
Upon the moral lessons of mankind:
Besides, he had not seen of several
hundred
A lady altogether to his mind.
A little *blasé*—'tis not to be wonder'd
At, that his heart had got a tougher
rind:
And though not vainer from his past
success,
No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXXII

He also had been busy seeing sights—
The Parliament and all the other
houses;
Had sat beneath the gallery at nights,
To hear debates whose thunder *roused*
(not *rouses*)

The world to gaze upon those northern

Which flash'd as far as where the musk-
bull browses;
He had also stood at times behind the
throne—
But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham
gone.

LXXXXIII

He saw, however, at the closing session,
That noble sight, when *really* free the
nation,
A king in constitutional possession
Of such a throne as is the proudest
station,
Though despots know it not—till the pro-
gression
Of freedom shall complete their educa-
tion.
'Tis not mere splendour makes the show
august
To eye or heart—it is the people's trust.

LXXXXIV

There, too, he saw (whate'er he may be
now)
A Prince, the prince of princes at the
time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of
prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace, too, rare in
every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finish'd gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXXV

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
Into the best society; and there
Occur'd what often happens, I'm afraid,
However disciplined and debonnaire:—
The talent and good humour he display'd,
Besides the mark'd distinction of his
air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to tempta-
tion,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXXVI

But what, and where, with whom, and
when, and why,
Is not to be put hastily together;
And as my object is morality
(Whatever people say), I don't know
whether
I'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
But harrow up his feelings till they
wither,
And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.

LXXXVII

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction
Ends. When the body of the book's

You'll find it of a different construction
From what some people say 'twill be
when done;

The plan at present's simply in concoction.
I can't oblige you, reader, to read on;
That's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
Should neither court neglect, nor dread
to bear it.

LXXXVIII

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
Remember, reader! you have had
before

The worst of tempests and the best of
battles,

That e'er were brew'd from elements or
gore,
Besides the most sublime of—Heaven
knows what else;

An usurer could scarce expect much
more—
But my best canto, save one on astronomy,
Will turn upon 'political economy.'

LXXXIX

That is your present theme for popularity:
Now that the public hedge hath scarce
a stake,

It grows an act of patriotic charity,
To show the people the best way to
break.

My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
Reserve it) will be very sure to take.

Meantime, read all the national-debt
sinkers,

And tell me what you think of our great
thinkers.

CANTO THE THIRTEENTH

I

I now mean to be serious;—it is time,
Since laughter now-a-days is deem'd
too serious;

A jest at Vice by Virtue's call'd a crime,
And critically held as deleterious:

Besides, the sad's a source of the sublime,
Although when long a little apt to
weary us;

And therefore shall my lay soar high and
solemn,

As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
('Tis an old Norman name, and to be
found

In pedigrees, by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic
ground)

Was high-born, weakly by her father's
will,

And beauteous, even where beauties
most abound,

In Britain—which of course true patriots
find

The goodliest soil of body and of mind.

III

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt
the best:

An eye's an eye, and whether black or
blue,

Is no great matter, so 'tis in request;
'Tis nonsense to dispute about a hu

The kindest may be taken as a test.

The fair sex should be always fair; and no
man

Till thirty, should perceive there's a plain
woman.

IV

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for
days

More quiet, when our moon's no more at
full,

We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull

Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's
ways;

Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger
place.

I know that some would fain postpone
this era,

Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,

For they have pass'd life's equinoctial
line:

But then they have their claret and
Madeira

To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,

And debt, and what not, for their solace
sent.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's called
the 'Nation'?

The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied specula-

tion?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them
warm,

Instead of love, that mere hallucina-
tion?

Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at

leisure.

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIII]

VII

Rough Johnson, the great moralist,
 profess'd,
 Right honestly, 'he liked an honest
 hater!'

The only truth that yet has been confest
 Within these latest thousand years or
 later.

Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in
 jest:—

For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
 And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel
 is,
 Much in the mode of Goethe's Mephisto-
 pheles;

VIII

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
 Though 'twas not once so. If I sneer
 sometimes,

It is because I cannot well do less,
 And now and then it also suits my
 rhymes.

I should be very willing to redress
 Men's wrongs, and rather check than
 punish crimes,
 Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
 Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts
 fail.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad,
 Because it makes us smile: his hero's
 right,
 And still pursues the right;—to curb the
 bad

His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
 His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
 But his adventures form a sorry sight;—
 A sorrier still is the great moral taught
 By that real epic unto all who have
 thought.

To aid the damsel and destroy the caltiff;
 Opposing singly the united strong,
 From foreign yoke to free the helpless
 native:—

Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
 Be for mere fancy's sport a theme
 creative,
 A jest, a riddle, Fame through thick and
 thin sought!

And Socrates himself but Wisdom's
 Quixote?

XI

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
 A single laugh demolish'd the right arm
 Of his own country;—seldom since that
 day
 Has Spain had heroes. While Romance
 could charm,

The world gave ground before her bright
 array;

And therefore have his volumes done
 such harm,
 That all their glory, as a composition,
 Was dearly purchased by his land's perdi-
 tion.

XII

I'm 'at my old lunes'—digression, and
 forget

The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
 The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
 Although she was not evil nor meant
 ill;

But Destiny and Passion spread the net
 (Fate is a good excuse for our own will),
 And caught them;—what do they not
 catch methinks?

But I'm not Edipus, and life's a Sphinx.

XIII

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
 To venture a solution: 'Davyus sum!'
 And now I will proceed upon the pair.

Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's
 hum,
 Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that's
 fair;

Whose charms made all men speak,
 and women dumb.
 The last's a miracle, and such was
 reckon'd,
 And since that time there has not been a
 second.

XIV

Chaste was she, to detraction's despera-
 tion,
 And wedded unto one she had loved
 well—

A man known in the councils of the
 nation,

Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
 Though apt to act with fire upon occasion,
 Proud of himself and her: the world
 could tell

Nought against either, and both seem'd
 secure—

She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

XV

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
 Arising out of business, often brought
 Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
 Into close contact. Though reserved,
 nor caught

By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and
 patience,

And talent, on his haughty spirit
 wrought,

And form'd a basis of esteem, which ends
 In making men what courtesy calls friends.

XVI

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
 Reserve and pride could make him, and
 full slow
 In judging men—when once his judgment
 was
 Determined, right or wrong, on friend
 or foe,
 Had all the pertinacity pride has,
 Which knows no ebb to its imperious
 flow,
 And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
 Because its own good pleasure hath
 decided.

XVII

His friendships, therefore, and no less
 aversions,
 Though oft well founded, which con-
 firm'd but more
 His prepossessions, like the laws of
 Persians
 And Medes, would ne'er revoke what
 went before.
 His feelings had not those strange fits, like
 tertians,
 Of common likings, which make some
 deplore
 What they should laugh at—the mere ague
 still
 Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII

"Tis not in mortals to command success:
 But *do you more*, Sempronius—*don't*
 deserve it,
 And take my word, you won't have any less.
 Be wary, watch the time, and always
 serve it;
 Give gently way, when there's too great a
 press;
 And for your conscience only learn to
 nerve it,
 For, like a racer, or a boxer training,
 'Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without
 paining.

XIX

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,
 As most men do, the little or the great;
 The very lowest find out an inferior,
 At least they think so, to exert their state
 Upon: for there are very few things wearier
 Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,
 Which mortals generously would divide,
 By bidding others carry while they ride.

XX

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
 O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
 In years he had the advantage of time's
 sequel;
 And, as he thought, in country much
 the same—

Because bold Britons have a tongue and
 free quill,
 At which all modern nations vainly aim;
 And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
 So that few members kept the House up
 later.

XXI

These were advantages: and then he
 thought—
 It was his foible, but by no means sinis-
 ter—
 That few or none more than himself had
 caught
 Court mysteries, having been himself a
 minister:
 He liked to teach that which he had been
 taught,
 And greatly shone whenever there had
 been a stir;
 And reconciled all qualities which grace
 man,
 Always a patriot, and sometimes a place-
 man.

XXII

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his
 gravity;
 He almost honour'd him for his
 docility;
 Because, though young, he acquiesced
 with suavity,
 Or contradicted but with proud
 humility.
 He knew the world, and would not see
 depravity
 In faults which sometimes show the
 soil's fertility,
 If that the weeds o'erlive not the first
 crop—
 For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII

And then he talk'd with him about
 Madrid,
 Constantinople, and such distant
 places;
 Where people always did as they were bid,
 Or did what they should not with
 foreign graces.
 Of couriers also spake they: Henry rid
 Well, like most Englishmen, and loved
 the races;
 And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
 Could back a horse, as despots ride a
 Russian.

XXIV

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble
 routs,
 And diplomatic dinners, or at other—
 For Juan stood well both with Ins and
 Outs,
 As in freemasonry a higher brother.

Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a
high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding matches with his
quality.

XXV

At Blank-Blank Square;—for we will
break no squares
By naming streets: since men are so
ensorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with
tares,
Reaping allusions private and in-
glorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's
affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be
notorious,
That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-
Blank Square.

XXVI

Also there bin another pious reason
For making squares and streets
anonymous;
Which is, that there is scarce a single
season
Which doth not shake some very
splendid house
With some slight heart-quake of domestic
treason—
A topic scandal doth delight to rouse:
Such I might stumble over unawares,
Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

XXVII

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
A place where peccadillos are unknown;
But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
Therefore I name not square, street, place,
until I
Find one where nothing naughty can be
shown,
A vestal shrine of innocence of heart:
Such are—but I have lost the London
Chart.

XXVIII

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank
Square,
Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
And some who had but talent for their
crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport everywhere;
Or even mere fashion, which indeed's
the best
Recommendation; and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX

And since 'there's safety in a multitude
Of counsellors,' as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage,
grave mood;—
Indeed we see the daily proof display'd
In senates, at the bar, in wordy feud,
Where'er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain's present wealth and happi-
ness;—

XXX

But as 'there's safety' grafted in the number
'Of counsellors' for men,—thus for the
sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue
slumber;
Or should it shake, the choice will more
perplex—
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more
against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe'er it
shocks some's
Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of
coxcombs.

XXXI

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little
merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high
spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due
estimation;
And for coquetry, she disdain'd to wear
it:
Secure of admiration, its impression
Was faint as of an every-day possession.

To all she was polite without parade;
To some she show'd attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery convey'd
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid;—
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
To those who were, or pass'd for meri-
torious,
Just to console sad glory for being glorious;

XXXII

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the shades of those distinguish'd men
Who were or are the puppet-shows of
praise,
The praise of persecution. Gaze again
On the most favour'd; and amidst the
blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-brow'd,
What can ye recognize?—a gilded cloud.

XXXIV

There also was of course in Adeline
That calm patrician polish in the
address,
Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
Of anything which nature would express;
Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine,—
At least his manner suffers not to guess,
That anything he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the
Chinese—

XXXV

Perhaps from Horace: his '*Nil admirari*'
Was what he call'd the 'Art of Happi-
ness'—
An art on which the artists greatly vary,
And have not yet attain'd to much
success.
However, 'tis expedient to be wary:
Indifference certes don't produce dis-
tress;
And rash enthusiasm in good society
Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

XXXVI

But Adeline was not indifferent: for
(Now for a common-place!) beneath the
snow,
As a volcano holds the lava more
Within—*et cætera*. Shall I go on?—No,
I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,
So let the often-used volcano go.
Poor thing! How frequently, by me and
others,
It hath been stirr'd up till its smoke quite
smothers!

XXXVII

I'll have another figure in a trice:—
What say you to a bottle of champagne?
Frozen into a very vinous ice,
Which leaves few drops of that
immortal rain,
Yet in the very centre, past all price,
About a liquid glassful will remain;
And this is stronger than the strongest grape
Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

XXXVIII

'Tis the whole spirit brought to a quint-
essence;
And thus the chilliest aspects may
concentre
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
And such are many—though I only
meant her
From whom I now deduce these moral

On which the Muse has always sought
to enter.
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you've broken their con-
founded ice.

XXXIX

But after all they are a North-West
Passage
Unto the glowing India of the soul;
And as the good ships sent upon that
message
Have not exactly ascertain'd the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky
presage),
Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost
(A chance still), 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

And young beginners may as well com-
mence
With quiet cruising o'er the ocean
Woman;
While those who are not beginners should
have sense
Enough to make for port, ere Time
shall summon
With his grey signal-flag; and the past
tense,
The dreary '*Fuimus*' of all things
human,
Must be declined, while life's thin thread's
spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing
gout.

XLI

But heaven must be diverted; its diversion
Is sometimes truculent—but never
mind;
The world upon the whole is worth the
assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are
kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the
Persian,
Of the 'Two Principles', but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled faith withal, or yoked
her in.

The English winter—ending in July,
To recommence in August—now was
done.
'Tis the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
On roads, east, south, north, west, there
is a run.
But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
Man's pity for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than
knowledge.

XLIII

The London winter's ended in July—
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIII

My Muse a glass of *Weatherology*;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV

When its quicksilver's down at zero,—lo!
Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage,
equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to
Soho,
And happiest they who horses can
engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten
Row
Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright
age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer
faces,
Sigh—as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV

They and their bills, 'Arcadians both,' are
left
To the Greek kalends of another session.
Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
What hope remains? Of *hope* the full
possession
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
At a long date—till they can get a fresh
one—
Hawk'd about at a discount, small or
large;
Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI

But these are trifles. Downward flies my
lord,
Nodding beside my lady in his carriage.
Away! away! 'Fresh horses!' are the
word,
And changed as quickly as hearts after
marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change
restored;
The postboys have no reason to
disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may
hiss hence,
The ostler pleads too for a reminiscence.

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the
dickey—
That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
Trick'd out, but modest more than
poet's pen
Can paint,—*'Cosi viaggino i Ricchi!'*
(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd: and what's
travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII

The London winter and the country
summer
Were well nigh over. 'Tis perhaps a
pity,
When nature wears the gown that doth
become her.
To lose those best months in a sweaty
city,
And wait until the nightingale grows
dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or
witty,
Ere patriots their true *country* can remem-
ber;—
But there's no shooting (save grouse) till
September.

XLIX

I've done with my tirade. The world was
gone;
The twice two thousand, for whom
earth was made,
Were vanish'd to be what they call alone—
That is, with thirty servants for parade,
As many guests, or more; before whom
groan
As many covers, duly, daily laid.
Let none accuse old England's hospi-
tality—
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
Departed like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine;
The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a
longer line,
Where time through heroes and through
beauties steers;
And oaks as olden as their pedigree
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

LI

A paragraph in every paper told
Of their departure: such is modern
fame:
'Tis pity that it takes no further hold
Than an advertisement, or much the
same;
When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows
cold.
The Morning Post was foremost to
proclaim—
'Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

'We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends;
'Midst whom we have heard, from
sources quite correct,

The Duke of D—— the shooting season
spends,
With many more by rapk and fashion
deck'd;

Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission.'

LIII

And thus we see—who doubts the Morn-
ing Post?

(Whose articles are like the 'Thirty-
nine,'
Which those most swear to who believe
them most)—

Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordain'd
to shine,
Deck'd by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, 'greatly
daring dine.'

'Tis odd, but true,—last war the News
abounded
More with these dinners than the kill'd or
wounded;—

LIV

As thus: 'On Thursday there was a grand
dinner;

Present, Lords A.B.C.'—Earls, dukes,
by name
Announced with no less pomp than
victory's winner:

Then underneath, and in the very same
Column: date, 'Falmouth. There has
lately been here

The Slap-dash regiment, so well known
to fame,

Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are fill'd up—see Gazette.'

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble
pair,—

An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion,—of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

LVI

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the
Druid oak

Stood, like Caractacus, in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the
thunderstroke,

And from beneath his boughs were seen
to sally

The dappled foresters; as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all
his herd,

To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a
bird.

LVII

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and
freshly fed

By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water
spread

Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid
bed:

The woods sloped downwards to its brink,
and stood

With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

LVIII

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again sub-
siding,

Its shriller echoes—like an infant made
Quiet—sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet: and thus allay'd,

Pursued its course, now gleaming, and
now hiding

Its windings through the woods; now
clear, now blue,

According as the skies their shadows
threw.

LIX

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's)
stood half apart

In a grand arch, which once screen'd
many an aisle.

These last had disappear'd—a loss to
art:

The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest
heart,

Which mourn'd the power of time's or
tempest's march,

In gazing on that venerable arch.

LX

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified
in stone;

But these had fallen, not when the friars
fell,

But in the war which struck Charles
from his throne,

When each house was a fortalice—as tell
The annals of full many a line undone,—

The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

LXI

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
The Virgin-Mother of the God-born
Child,

With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd
round;

Spared by some chance when all beside

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIII

She made the earth below seem holy ground.

This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

LXII

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colour-
ings,

Through which the deepen'd glories once
could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's
wings,

Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now
fainter,

The gale sweeps through its fretwork,
and oft sings

The owl his anthem, where the silenced
quire

Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like
fire.

LXIII

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is winged from one point of
heaven,

There moans a strange unearthly sound,
which then

Is musical—a dying accent driven
Through the huge arch, which soars and
sinks again.

Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonised by the old choral wall:

LXIV

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given
the power

(Though less than that of Memnon's
statue, warm

In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or
tower;

The cause I know not, nor can solve; but
such

The fact:—I've heard it,—once perhaps
too much.

LXV

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings
quaint—

Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a
saint:

The spring gush'd through grim mouths
of granite made,

And sparkled into basins, where it spent
its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer
troubles.

LXVI

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has
been

Elsewhere preserved: the cloisters still
were stable,

The cells, too, and refectory, I ween:
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or
sunk,

And spoke more of the baron than the
monk.

LXVII

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious
chambers, join'd

By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur; but when
combined,

Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their
hearts:

We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

LXVIII

Steel barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly pre-
servation:

And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their
station:

And countesses mature in robes and
pearls:

Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire
them freely.

LXIX

Judges in very formidable ermine
Were there, with brows that did not
much invite

The accused to think their lordships would
determine

His cause by leaning much from might
to right:

Bishops, who had not left a single sermon;
Attorneys-general, awful to the sight,

As hinting more (unless our judgments
warp us)

Of the 'Star Chamber' than of 'Habeas
Corpus.'

LXX

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the
lead;

Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial
fold,

Huger than twelve of our degenerate
breed:

Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold:

Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contain'd the steed;
And here and there some stern high patriot stood,
Who could not get the place for which he sued.

LXXI

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,
Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's:
Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone
In Vernet's ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic anchorite:—
But, lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish
Or Dutch with thirst—What, ho! a flask of Rhenish.

LXXIII

O reader! if that thou canst read,—and know,
'Tis not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader; there must go
Virtues of which both you and I have need.
Firstly, begin with the beginning—(though
That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed:
Thirdly, commence not with the end—or, sinning
In this sort, end at last with the beginning.

LXXIV

But reader, thou hast patient been of late,
While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
Dan Phœbus takes me for an auctioneer.
That poets were so from their earliest date,
By Homer's 'Catalogue of ships' is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate—
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

LXXV

The mellow autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket:—lynx-like is his aim;
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
Ah, nutbrown partridges! Ah, brilliant pheasants!
And ah, ye poachers!—'Tis no sport for peasants.

LXXVI

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines
The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light, and the Madeira strong;
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
Which makes the southern autumn's day appear
As if 'twould to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,—
Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine,—
The sea-coal fires, the 'earliest of the year';
Without doors, too, she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gain'd in yellow.

LXXVIII

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura*—
Rife with more horns than hounds—she hath the chase,
So animated that it might allure a
Saint from his beads to join the jocund race;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,
And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of bores, who ought to be made game.

LXXIX

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
Consisted of—we give the sex the *pas*—
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess Crabby;
The Ladies Scilly, Busey;—Miss Eclat,

Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss
O'Tabby,
And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's
squaw;
Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black
sheep:

LXXX

With other Countesses of Blank—but
rank;
At once the 'lie' and the *élite* of
crowds;
Who pass like water filter'd in a tank,
All purged and pious from their native
clouds;
Or paper turn'd to money by the Bank:
No matter how or why, the passport
shrouds
The *passée* and the past; for good
society
Is no less famed for tolerance than piety,—

LXXXI

That is, up to a certain point; which point
Forms the most difficult in punctua-
tion.
Appearances appear to form the joint
On which it hinges in a higher station;
And so that no explosion cry 'Aroint
Thee, witch!' or each Medea has her
Jason;
Or (to the point with Horace and with
Pulci)
'*Omne tulit punctum, quæ miscuit utile
dulci.*'

LXXXII

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.
I've seen a virtuous woman put down
quite
By the mere combination of a coterie;
Also a so-so matron boldly fight
Her way back to the world by dint of
plottery,
And shine the very *Siria* of the spheres,
Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII

I have seen more than I'll say:—but we
will see
How our '*villeggiatura*' will get on.
The party might consist of thirty-three
Of highest caste—the Brahmins of the
ton.
I have named a few, not foremost in
degree,
But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may
run,
By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst
these
There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV

There was Parolles, too, the legal bully,
Who limits all his battles to the bar
And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
He shows more appetite for words than
war.
There was the young bard Rackrhyme,
who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six weeks'
star.
There was Lord Pyrrho, too, the great
freethinker;
And Sir John PottledEEP, the mighty
drinker.

LXXXV

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a—
duke,
'Ay, every inch a' duke; there were
twelve peers
Like Charlemagne's—and all such peers
in *look*
And *intellect*, that neither eyes nor
ears
For commoners had ever them mistook.
There were the six Miss Rawbolds—
pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were
set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

LXXXVI

There were four Honourable Misters,
whose
Honour was more before their names
than after;
There was the *preux Chevalier de la
Ruse*,
Whom France and Fortune lately
deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to
amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious
laughter,
Because—such was his magic power to
please—
The dice seem'd charm'd, too, with his re-
partees.

LXXXVII

There was Dick Dubious, the metaphysi-
cian,
Who loved philosophy and a good
dinner;
Angle, the *soi-disant* mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-
winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Pre-
cision,
Who did not hate so much the sin as
sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII

There was Jack Jargon, the gigantic
guardsman;
And General Fireface, famous in the
field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than
he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welsh Judge,
Jefferies Hardsman,
In his grave office so completely skill'd,
That when a culprit came for condemna-
tion,
He had his judge's joke for consolation.

LXXXIX

Good company's a chess-board—there
are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns;
the world's a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own
strings,
Methinks gay Punch hath something
of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether with-
out aim,
Alighting rarely:—were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would
mourn it.

XC

I had forgotten—but must not forget—
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly
transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
With his *début*, which made a strong
impression,
And rank'd with what is every day dis-
play'd—
'The best first speech that ever yet was made.'

XCI

Proud of his 'Hear him!' proud, too, of
his vote
And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),
He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more
effrontery,
'His country's pride,' he came down to the
country.

XCII

There also were two wits by acclamation,
Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow
from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;
But Strongbow's wit was of more
polish'd breed;

Longbow was rich in an imagination
As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato,—
While Strongbow's best things might have
come from Cato.

XCIII

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsi-
chord;
But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim
accord,
And make a music, whether flat or
sharp.
Of Strongbow's talk you would not change
a word:
At Longbow's phrases you might some-
times carp:
Both wits—one born so, and the other
bred,
This by his heart—his rival by his head.

XCIV

If all these seem a heterogeneous mass
To be assembled at a country seat,
Yet think, a specimen of every class
Is better than a humdrum tête-à-tête.
The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
When Congreve's fool could vie with
Molière's *bête*:
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than
dress.

XCV

Our ridicules are kept in the back ground—
Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions, too, are no more to be found
Professional; and there is nought to
cull
Of folly's fruit; for though your fools
abound,
They're barren, and not worth the pains
to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the *Bores*
and *Bored*.

XCVI

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners,
gleaning
The scanty but right-well thresh'd ears
of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather
meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I—modest Ruth.
Further I'd quote, but Scripture inter-
vening
Forbids. A great impression in my
youth
Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries
'That Scriptures out of church are blas-
phemies.'

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIII

XCVII

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not
grist.

I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist,
Who, in his common-place book, had a
page

Prepared each morn for evenings.

'List, oh list!'

'Alas, poor ghost!'—What unexpected
woes

Await those who have studied their *bons-
mots*!

XCVIII

Firstly, they must allure the conversation

By many windings to their clever clinch;

And secondly, must let slip no occasion,

Nor *bate* (abate) their hearers of an *inch*,

But take an ell—and make a great sensation,

If possible; and thirdly, never flinch

When some smart talker puts them to the
test,

But seize the last word, which no doubt's
the best.

XCIX

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts;

The party we have touch'd on were the
guests.

Their table was a board to tempt even
ghosts

To pass the *Styx* for more substantial
feasts.

I will not dwell upon *ragoûts* or roasts,

Albeit all human history attests

That happiness for man—the hungry sin-
ner!—

Since Eve ate apples, much depends on
dinner.

C

Witness the lands which 'flow'd with milk
and honey,'

Held out unto the hungry Israelites:

To this we have added since, the love of
money,

The only sort of pleasure which requites.

Youth fades, and leaves our days no
longer sunny;

We tire of mistresses and parasites;

But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would
lose thee?

When we no more can use, or even abuse
thee!

CI

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,

Or hunt: the young, because they liked
the sport—

The first thing boys like after play and fruit;

The middle-aged, to make the day more
short;

For *ennui* is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language:—we
retort

The fact for words, and let the French
translate

That awful yawn which sleep cannot abate.

CII

The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the
pictures,

Or saunter'd through the gardens piteous-
ly,

And made upon the hot-house several
strictures,

Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their
lectures,

Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII

But none were *géné*: the great hour of
unions

Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all
were

Masters of their own time—or in commu-
nion,

Or solitary, as they chose to bear

The hours, which how to pass is but to few
known.

Each rose up at his own, and had to
spare

What time he chose for dress, and broke
his fast

When, where, and how he chose for that
repast.

CIV

The ladies—some rouged, some a little
pale—

Met the morn as they might. If fine,
they rode,

Or walk'd; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from
abroad;

Discuss'd the fashion which might next
prevail,

And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little
letter,

To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.

The earth has nothing like a she epistle,
And hardly heaven—because it never ends.

I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it in-
tends,

But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon:—you had
better

Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI

Then there were billiards; cards, too, but
no dice;
 Save in the clubs no man of honour
 plays;
 Boats when 'twas water, skating when
 'twas ice,
 And the hard frost destroy'd the scent-
 ing days;
 And angling, too, that solitary vice,
 Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says:
 The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his
 gullet
 Should have a hook, and a small trout to
 pull it.

CVII

With evening came the banquet and the
 wine;
 The conversazione; the duet,
 Attuned by voices more or less divine
 (My heart or head aches with the mem-
 ory yet).
 The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would
 shine;
 But the two youngest loved more to be
 set
 Down to the harp—because to music's
 charms
 They added graceful necks, white hands
 and arms.

CVIII

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field
 days,
 For then the gentlemen were rather
 tired)
 Display'd some sylph-like figures in its
 maze;
 Then there was small-talk ready when
 required;
 Flirtation—but decorous; the mere praise
 Of charms that should or should not be
 admired.
 The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er
 again,
 And then retreated soberly—at ten.

CIX

The politicians, in a nook apart,
 Discuss'd the world, and settled all the
 spheres;
 The wits watch'd every loophole for their
 art,
 To introduce a *bon-mot* head and
 ears;
 Small is the rest of those who would be
 smart,
 A moment's good thing may have cost
 them years
 Before they find an hour to introduce it;
 And then, even *then*, some bore may make
 them lose it.

CX

But all was gentle and aristocratic
 In this our party; polish'd, smooth, and
 cold,
 As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
 There now are no Squire Westerns as
 of old;
 And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
 But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
 We have no accomplish'd blackguards,
 like Tom Jones,
 But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

CXI

They separated at an early hour;
 That is, ere midnight—which is Lon-
 don's noon;
 But in the country ladies seek their bower
 A little earlier than the waning moon.
 Peace to the slumbers of each folded
 flower—
 May the rose call back its true colour
 soon!
 Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest
 tinters,
 And lower the price of rouge—at least
 some winters.

CANTO THE FOURTEENTH

I

If from great nature's or our own abyss
 Of thought we could but snatch a cer-
 tainty,
 Perhaps mankind might find the path they
 miss—
 But then 'twould spoil much good philo-
 sophy.
 One system eats another up, and this
 Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;
 For when his pious consort gave him
 stones
 In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II

But System doth reverse the Titan's break-
 fast,
 And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
 Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
 After due search, your faith to any
 question?
 Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
 You bind yourself, and call some mode
 the best one.
 Nothing more true than *not* to trust your
 senses;
 And yet what are your other evidences?

III

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
 Admit, reject, condemn; and what know
 you,
 Except perhaps that you were born to die?
 And both may after all turn out untrue.

An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes
men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

IV

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent
clay!

The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret),
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of
death.

V

'Tis round him, near him, here, there,
everywhere,
And there's a courage which grows out
of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will
dare
The worst to *know* it:—when the moun-
tains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and
there
You look down o'er the precipice, and
drear
The gulf of rock yawns,—you can't gaze a
minute,
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI

'Tis true, you don't—but, pale and struck
with terror,
Retire: but look into your past im-
pression!
And you will find, though shuddering at
the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self-
confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown*; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fears—but where?
You know not,
And that's the reason why you do—or
do not.

VII

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing; a mere specula-
tion,
For which my sole excuse is—'tis my way;
Sometimes *with* and sometimes without
occasion,
I write what's uppermost, without delay;
This narrative is not meant for narra-
tion,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common
places.

VIII

You know, or don't know, that great
Bacon saith,
'Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way
the wind blows;'
And such a straw, borne on by human
breath,
Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and
death,
A shadow which the onward soul be-
hind throws:
And mine's a bubble, not blown up for
praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX

The world is all before me—or behind;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in
mind;—
Of passions, too, I have proved enough
to blame,
To the great pleasure of our friends, man-
kind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with
fame;
For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

X

I have brought this world about my ears,
and eke
The other; that's to say, the clergy—
who
Upon my head have bid their thunders
break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And *now* because I feel it growing dull.

XI

But 'why then publish?'—There are no
rewards,
Of fame or profit when the world grows
weary.
I ask in turn,—Why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read?—To make
some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or
cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink—I have had at least my
dream.

XII

I think that were I *certain* of success,
I hardly could compose another line:
So long I've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the
Nine.

This feeling 'tis not easy to express,
And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.
In play, there are two pleasures for your
choosing—
The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in
fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight
restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and
acts—
And that's one cause she meets with con-
tradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er
attracts;
And were her object only what's call'd
glory,
With more ease too she'd tell a different
story.

XIV

Love, war, a tempest—surely there's
variety:
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye-view, too, of that wild,
Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every
station.
If you have nought else, here's at least
satiety,
Both in performance and in prepara-
tion;
And though these lines should only line
portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these
Cantos.

XV

The portion of this world which I at
present
Have taken up to fill the following ser-
mon,
Is one of which there's no description
recent:
The reason why, is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and
pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and
ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all
ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

XVI

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all
times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their
crimes;

Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which
sublimes
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth
monotony
Of character, in those at least who have
got any.

XVII

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade,
They break their ranks and gladly leave
the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back
afraid,
And they must be or seem what they
were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade:
But when of the first sight you have had
your fill,
It palls—at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and ennui.

XVIII

When we have made our love, and gamed
our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, some-
thing more;
With dandies dined; heard senators de-
claiming;
Seen beauties brought to market by the
score,
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely
taming;
There's little left but to be bored or
bore.
Witness those *ci-devant jeunes hommes*
who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which
leaveth them.

XIX

'Tis said—indeed a general complaint—
That no one has succeeded in describing
The *monde*, exactly as they ought to paint:
Some say, that authors only snatch, by
bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange
and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral
gibing;
And that their books have but one style in
common—
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her
woman.

XX

But this can't well be true, just now; for
writers
Are grown of the *beau monde* a part
potential:
I've seen them balance even the scale with
fighters,
Especially when young, for that's essen-
tial.

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIV

Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most
consequential,
The real portrait of the highest tribe?
'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe.

XXI

'*Haud ignara loquor*;' these are *Nuga*,
'*quarum*
Parva fui,' but still art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a
harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to
spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep
apart.
'*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit*'—
Which means, that vulgar people must
not share it.

XXII

And therefore what I throw off is ideal—
Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of free-
masons
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to
Jason's.
The grand *arcanum*'s not for men to see
all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be
appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII

Alas! worlds fall—and woman, since she
fell'd
The world (as, since that history, less
polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly
held),
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor thing of usages! coerced, compell'd,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft
when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their
sins
Have shaving too entail'd upon their
chins,—

XXIV

A daily plague, which in the aggregate
May average on the whole with parturi-
tion.
But as to women, who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she con-
dition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more sus-
picion.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers, to breed a
nation.

XXV

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends
and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her
fetter,
That—but ask any woman if she'd
choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?

XXVI

'Petticoat influence' is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain
be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are
brought,
By various joltings of life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat—
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and
goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser's
hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth con-
ceal—
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief—for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

XXVIII

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its
spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing,—
'Tis pleasant, if *then* anything is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty
peasant.

XXIX

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on
climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to
rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that
shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most
sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun*—
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX

An in-door life is less poetical;
 And out-of-door bath showers, and
 mists, and sleet,
 With which I could not brew a pastoral.
 But be it as it may, a bard must meet
 All difficulties, whether great or small,
 To spoil his undertaking, or complete,
 And work away like spirit upon matter,
 Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and
 water.

XXXI

Juan—in this respect, at least, like saints—
 Was all things unto people of all sorts,
 And lived contentedly, without com-
 plaints,
 In camps, in ships, in cottages, or
 courts—
 Born with that happy soul which seldom
 faints,
 And mingling modestly in toils or
 sports.
 He likewise could be most things to all
 women,
 Without the coxcombry of certain *she*
 men.

XXXII

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
 'Tis also subject to the double danger
 Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
 Some pleasant jesting at the awkward
 stranger;
 But Juan had been early taught to range
 The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd
 avenger,
 So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
 Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII

And now in this new field, with some ap-
 plause,
 He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double
 post, and rail,
 And never *craned*, and made but few '*faux*
pas,'
 And only fretted when the scent 'gan
 fail.
 He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the
 laws
 Of hunting—for the sagest youth is
 frail;
 Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and
 then,
 And once o'er several country gentlemen.

XXXIV

But on the whole, to general admiration
 He acquitted both himself and horse:
 the squires
 Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
 The boors cried 'Dang it! who'd have
 thought it?'—Sires,

The Nestors of the sporting generation,
 Swore praises, and recall'd their former
 fires;
 The huntman's self relented to a grin,
 And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV

Such were his trophies—not of spear and
 shield,
 But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes
 foxes' brushes;
 Yet I must own,—although in this I yield
 To patriot sympathy a Briton's blush-
 es,—
 He thought at heart like courtly Chester-
 field,
 Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales,
 bushes,
 And what not, though he rode beyond all
 price,
 Ask'd next day, 'If men ever hunted
twice?'

XXXVI

He also had a quality uncommon
 To early risers after a long chase,
 Who wake in winter ere the cock can sum-
 mon
 December's drowsy day to his dull
 race,—
 A quality agreeable to woman,
 When her soft, liquid words run on
 apace,
 Who likes a listener, whether saint or sin-
 ner,—
 He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

XXXVII

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
 And shone in the best part of dialogue,
 By humouring always what they might
 assert,
 And listening to the topics most in
 vogue,—
 Now grave, now gay, but never dull or
 pert;
 And smiling but in secret—cunning
 rogue!—
 He ne'er presumed to make an error
 clearer;—
 In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII

And then he danced,—all foreigners excel
 The serious Angles in the eloquence
 Of pantomime,—he danced, I say, right
 well,
 With emphasis, and also with good
 sense—
 A thing in footing indispensable;
 He danced without theatrical pretence,
 Not like a ballet-master in the van
 Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentle-
 man.

XXXIX

Chaste were his steps, each kept within
due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his
figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the
ground,
And rather held in than put forth his
vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchet critic's
rigour.
Such classic *pas*—sans flaws—set off our
hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

XL

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco, which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no
more a
Remnant were there of the old world's
sole throne.
The '*tout ensemble*' of his movements
wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the colour
Of bards and prosers, words are void of
colour.

XLI

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much ad-
mired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.
Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so
much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved
tracasserie,
Began to treat him with some small *aga-
cerie*.

XLII

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown
blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, *grand
monde*.
I'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish
ground;
Besides there might be falsehood in
what's stated;
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLIII

This noble personage began to look
A little black upon this new flirtation;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
More freedoms of the female corpora-
tion.

Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
'Twill but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

XLIV

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then
sneer'd;
The misses bridled, and the matrons
frown'd;
Some hoped things might not turn out as
they fear'd;
Some would not deem such women
could be found;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they
heard;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd
profound;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV

But what is odd, none ever named the
duke,
Who, one might think, was something
in the affair:
True, he was absent, and, 'twas rumour'd,
took
But small concern about the when, or
where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all
doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall
out.

XLVI

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so
bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Look'd grave and pale to see her friend's
fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensi-
bility.

There's nought in this bad world like
sympathy;
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face,
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels
lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with—'Would you had
thought twice!
Ah! if you had but follow'd my advice!'

XLVIII

O Job! you had two friends; one's quite enough,
 Especially when we are ill at ease;
 They're but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
 Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
 Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
 As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
 When your affairs come round, one way or t'other,
 Go to the coffee-house, and take another.

XLIX

But this is not my maxim; had it been,
 Some heart-aches had been spared me:
 yet I care not—
 I would not be a tortoise in his screen
 Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not;
 'Tis better on the whole to have felt and seen
 That which humanity may bear, or bear not;
 'Twill teach discernment to the sensitive,
 And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

L

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
 Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
 Is that portentous phrase, 'I told you so,'
 Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the past,
 Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
 Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,
 And solace your slight lapse 'gainst *bonos mores*,
 With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
 Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
 Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
 Unless her habits should begin to mend:
 But Juan also shared in her austerity,
 But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
 His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
 And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

LII

These forty days' advantage of her years—
 And hers were those which can face calculation,
 Boldly referring to the list of peers
 And noble births, nor dread the enumeration—

Gave her a right to have maternal fears
 For a young gentleman's fit education;
 Though she was far from that leap year,
 whose leap,
 In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII

This may be fix'd at somewhere before thirty—
 Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
 The strictest in chronology and virtue
 Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
 O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe,
 so dirty
 With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
 Reset it: shave more smoothly, also slower,
 If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
 Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
 'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
 For she had seen the world and stood its test,
 As I have said in—I forget what page;
 My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
 By this time;—but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
 And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

LV

At sixteen she came out; presented,
 vaunted,
 She put all coronets into commotion:
 At seventeen, too, the world was still enchanted
 With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:
 At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
 A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
 She had consented to create again
 That Adam, call'd 'the happiest of men.'

LVI

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing winters,
 Admired, adored; but also so correct,
 That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
 Without the apparel of being circum-spect:
 They could not even glean the slightest splinters
 From off the marble, which had no defect.
 She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
 To bear a son and heir—and one miscarriage.

LVII

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around
her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to
wound her—

She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's
flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant pro-
founder;
But whatsoe'er she wish'd, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue,
dignify
A woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

LVIII

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle
Which with the landlord makes too long
a stand,
Leaving all claretless the unmoisten'd
throttle,
Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
Who whirl the dust as simooms whirl
the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,
A laureate's ode, or servile peer's 'con-
tent.'

LIX

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwined with the
earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy
mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

LX

With the kind view of saving an *éclat*,
Both to the duchess and diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist—
(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with
juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure
is;—)

LXI

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might
best impede
The further progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the world, and doth not
need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
His Grace was an enduring, married
man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons: but she dreaded
first
The magic of her Grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seem'd to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

LXIII

Her Grace, too, pass'd for being an *intri-
gante*,
And somewhat *méchante* in her amor-
ous sphere:
One of those pretty, precious plagues,
which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to make a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or
glow,
And—what is worst of all—won't let you
go;

LXIV

The sort of thing to turn a young man's
head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,
Than wear a heart a woman loves to
rend.
'Tis best to pause, and think, ere you rush
on,
If that a '*bonne fortune*' be really '*bonne*.'

LXV

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew
no guile,
She call'd her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a
smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the siren's wile;
And answer'd, like a statesman or a
prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing
of it.

LXVI

Firstly, he said, 'he never interfered
In anybody's business but the king's':
Next, that 'he never judged from what
appear'd,
Without
things'.
Thirdly, that 'Juan had more brain than
beard,
And was not to be held in leading-
strings';

And fourthly, what need hardly be said
twice,
'That good but rarely came from good
advice.'

LXVII

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the
truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, for-
sooth—
At least as far as *bienséance* allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of
youth;
That young men rarely made monastic
vows;
That opposition only more attaches—
But here a messenger brought in des-
patches:

LXVIII

And being of the council call'd 'the Privy,'
Lord Henry walk'd into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's
debt;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

LXIX

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coin'd in conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though
not new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was
in't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired; and, as he went out, calmly kiss'd
her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

LXX

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every-
thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birthdays, glorious with a star and
string;
The very model of a chamberlain—
And such I mean to make him when I
reign.

LXXI

But there was something wanting on the
whole—
I don't know what, and therefore can-
not tell—
Which pretty women—the sweet souls!—
call *soul*.
Certes it was not body; he was well

Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

LXXII

Still there was something wanting, as I've
said—
That undefinable '*Je ne sais quoi*,'
Which, for what I know, may of yore have
led
To Homer's *Iliad*, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's
bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the
Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaüs:—
But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII

There is an awkward thing which much
perplexes,
Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes;
Neither can show quite *how* they would
be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects
us—
The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back 'tis better not to venture.

LXXIV

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the sex are always seeking;
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub—and this they are but
weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high
seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore
through every shock,
'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

LXXV

There is a flower call'd 'Love in Idleness,'
For which see Shakespeare's ever-
blooming garden;—
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British godship's humble
pardon,
If, in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is war-
den;—
But though the flower is different, with the
French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry '*Voilà la Per-
venche!*'

LXXVI

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIV

Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to
express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship,
the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her supercargo.

LXXVII

'*Beatus ille procul!*' from '*negotiiis*,'
Saith Horace: the great little poet's
wrong;
His other maxim, '*Noscitur à sociis*,'
Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too
ferocious,
Unless good company be kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or
station,
Thrice happy they who *have* an occupa-
tion!

LXXVIII

Adam exchanged his Paradise for plough-
ing,
Eve made up millinery with fig leaves—
The earliest knowledge from the tree so
knowing,
As far as I know, that the church re-
ceives:
And since that time it need not cost much
showing,
That many of the ills o'er which man
grieves,
And still more women, spring from not
employing
Some hours to make the remnant worth
enjoying.

LXXIX

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
A rack of pleasures, where we must
invent
A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.
Bards may sing what they please about
Content;
Contented, when translated, means but
cloy'd;
And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue-devils, and blue-stockings, and ro-
mances
Reduced to practice, and perform'd like
dances.

LXXX

I do declare, upon an affidavit,
Romances I ne'er read like those I have
seen;
Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,
Would some believe that such a tale had
been:
But such intent I never had, nor have it;
Some truths are better kept behind a
screen,
Especially when they would look like lies;
I therefore deal in generalities.

LXXXI

'An oyster may be cross'd in love,'—and
why?
Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And *à-propos* of monks, their piety
With sloth hath found it difficult to
dwell;
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing, or
say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus
down,
Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some
summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights;
You have freed the *blacks*—now pray shut
up the whites.

LXXXIII

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that 'sauce for goose is sauce
for gander,'
And ask them how *they* like to be in
thrall?
Shut up each high heroic salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay's but
small);
Shut up—no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 'twill cost us all another million.

LXXXIV

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of *soi-disant* sound
mind.
This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among man-
kind;
But till that *point d'appui* is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as 'twas.

LXXXV

Our gentle Adeline had one defect—
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid
mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its ex-
pansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 'tis frailer, doubtless, than a
stanch one;
But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an earthquake's ruin.

LXXXVI

She loved her lord, or thought so; but *that*
love

Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sisyphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the
soil.

She had nothing to complain of, or re-
prove,

No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble,—conjugal, but cold.

LXXXVII

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never
clash'd:

They moved like stars united in their
spheres,

Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters
wash'd,

Where mingled, and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all blueely dash'd
Through the serene and placid glassy
deep,

Which fain would lull its river-child to
sleep.

LXXXVIII

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In anything, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous
matter:

Impressions were much stronger than she
guess'd,

And gather'd as they run like growing
water

Upon her mind: the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

LXXXIX

But when it was, she had that lurking
demon

Of double nature, and thus doubly
named—

Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and sea-
men,

That is, when they succeed; but greatly
blamed

As *obstinacy*, both in men and women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is
tamed:—

And 'twill perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous
quality.

XC

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,
It had been firmness; now 'tis perti-
nacity:

Must the event decide between the two?
I leave it to your people of sagacity

DON JUAN

To draw the line between the false and
true,
If such can e'er be drawn by man's
capacity:

My business is with Lady Adeline,
Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI

She knew not her own heart; then how
should I?

I think not she was *then* in love with
Juan:

If so, she would have had the strength to fly
The wild sensation, unto her a new one:

She merely felt a common sympathy
(I will not say it was a false or true one)
In him, because she thought he was in
danger,—

Her husband's friend, her own, young,
and a stranger.

XCII

She was, or thought she was, his friend—
and this

Without the farce of friendship, or ro-
mance

Of platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but
in France,

Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.

To thus much Adeline would not ad-
vance;

But of such friendship as man's may to
man be

She was as capable as woman can be.

XCIII

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
Will there, as also in the ties of blood,

An innocent predominance annex,
And tune the concord to a finer mood.

If free from passion, which all friendship
checks,

And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
So that you have not been nor will be
lovers.

XCIV

Love bears within its breast the very
germ

Of change; and how should this be
otherwise?

That violent things more quickly find a
term

Is shown through nature's whole analo-
gies;

And how should the most fierce of all be
firm?

Would you have endless lightning in the
skies?

Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should 'the *tender* passion' e'er be
tough?

DON JUAN

[CANTO XIV

XCv

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)

Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a zany.

I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)

Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

XCvI

I've also seen some female *friends* ('tis odd,
But true—as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin,
abroad,

At home, far more than ever yet was Love—

Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;

Who fought, and fight, in absence, too,
my battles,

Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCvII

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:

At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense*:

The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied
Spanish,

To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd
'small,'

Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

XCIX

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter;
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.

And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this epic satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

But great things spring from little:—
Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion

As e'er brought man and woman to the brink

Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link

Of such a sentimental situation?
You'll never guess, I'll bet you millions,
milliards—

It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

CI

'Tis strange,—but true; for truth is always strange;

Stranger than fiction: if it could be told,
How much would novels gain by the exchange!

How differently the world would men behold!

How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,

If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

CII

What 'antres vast and deserts idle' then
Would be discover'd in the human soul!

What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
With self-love in the centre as their pole!
What Anthropophagi are nine or ten
Of those who hold the kingdoms in control!

Were things but only call'd by their right name,

Cæsar himself would be ashamed of fame.

CANTO THE FIFTEENTH

I

AH!—What should follow slips from my reflection;

Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
As *à-propos* of hope or retrospection,
As though the lurking thought had follow'd free.

All present life is but an interjection,
An 'Oh!' or 'Ah!' of joy or misery,
Or a 'Ha! ha!' or 'Bah!'—a yawn, or
'Pooh!'

Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

But, more or less, the whole's a syncopé
Or a *singultus*—emblems of emotion,
That grand antithesis to great *ennui*,
Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean,

That watery outline of eternity,
Or miniature at least, as is my notion,
Which ministers unto the soul's delight,
In seeing matters which are out of sight.

III

But all are better than the sigh suppress,
Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
Making the countenance a masque of rest,
And turning human nature to an art.
Few men dare show their thoughts of
worst or best;
Dissimulation always sets apart
A corner for herself; and therefore fiction
Is that which passes with least contradiction.

IV

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who cannot
Remember, without telling, passion's
errors?
The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,
Hath got *blue devils* for his morning
mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to
float,
He cannot sink his tremours or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst
sand.

V

And as for love—O love!—We will proceed.
The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
Must perch harmonious on my tuneful
quill.
There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had
ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

VI

The Lady Adeline, right honourable,
And honour'd, ran a risk of growing less
so;
For few of the soft sex are very stable
In their resolves—alas! that I should
say so;
They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted;—I presume to
guess so,
But will not swear: yet both upon occasion,
Till old, may undergo adulteration.

VII

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmingled essence of the grape;
and yet
Bright as a new napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set;
A page where Time should hesitate to
print age,
And for which Nature might forego her
debt—
Sole creditor whose process doth involve
in't
The luck of finding everybody solvent.

VIII

O Death! thou dunnest of all duns! thou
daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest
tap,
Like a meek tradesman when, approach-
ing palely,
Some splendid debtor he would take by
sap:
But oft denied, as patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money, or 'a draft on Ransom.'

IX

Whate'er thou takest, spare awhile poor
Beauty!
She is so rare, and thou hast so much
prey.
What though she now and then may slip
from duty,
The more's the reason why you ought to
stay;
Gaunt Gourmand! with whole nations for
your booty,
You should be civil in a modest way:
Suppress, then, some slight feminine dis-
eases,
And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

X

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous
Where she was interested (as was said),
Because she was not apt, like some of us,
To like too readily, or too high bred
To show it—(points we need not now dis-
cuss)—
Would give up artlessly both heart and
head
Unto such feelings as seem'd innocent,
For objects worthy of the sentiment.

XI

Some parts of Juan's history, which
Rumour,
That live gazette, had scatter'd to dis-
figure,
She had heard; but women hear with more
good humour
Such aberrations than we men of rigour:
Besides, his conduct, since in England,
grew more
Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier
vigour;
Because he had, like Alcibiades,
The art of living in all climes with ease.

XII

His manner was perhaps the more seduc-
tive,
Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to
seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest: no abuse

DON JUAN

[CANTO XV

Of his attractions marr'd the fair per-

To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, 'Resist us if you can'—
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a
man.

XIII

They are wrong—that's not the way to set
about it;

As, if they told the truth, could well be
shown.

But, right or wrong, Don Juan was with-
out it;

In fact, his manner was his own alone:
Sincere he was—at least you could not
doubt it,

In listening merely to his voice's tone.
The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

XIV

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion; though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem'd to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put you on your
guard:

Perhaps 'twas hardly quite assured enough,
But modesty's at times its own reward.
Like virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there's need to
mention.

XV

Serene, accomplish'd, cheerful but not
loud;

Insinuating without insinuation;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation;
Proud with the proud, yet courteously
proud,

So as to make them feel he knew his
station

And theirs:—without a struggle for prior-
ity,

He neither brook'd nor claim'd superior-
ity—

XVI

That is, with men: with women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for;
and their

Imagination's quite enough for that:
So that the outline's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvas up—and '*verbum sat*.'
If once their phantasies be brought to
bear

Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a
Raphael.

XVII

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her
own:

'Tis thus the good will amiably err,
And eke the wise, as has been often
shown.

Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well
known;

And persecuted sages teach the schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

XVIII

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater
Bacon?

Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all
ill?

Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might
fill

Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the
nations.

XIX

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety:

With no great care for what is nicknamed
glory,

But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With anybody in a ride or walk.

XX

I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;

But there's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a
time.

Of this I'm sure at least, there's no ser-
vility

In mine irregularity of chime,
Which rings what's uppermost of new or
hoary,

Just as I feel the *Improvisatore*.

XXI

'*Omnia vult belle Matho dicere—dic ali-
quando*

Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.'
The first is rather more than mortal can do;

The second may be sadly done or gaily;
The third is still more difficult to stand to;

The fourth we hear, and see, and say
too, daily:

The whole together is what I could wish
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

XXII

A modest hope—but modesty's my forte,
And pride my feeble:—let us ramble on.

I meant to make this poem very short,
But now I can't tell where it may not run.

No doubt, if I had wish'd to pay my court
To critics, or to hail the setting sun
Of tyranny of all kinds, my concision
Were more;—but I was born for opposi-
tion.

XXIII

But then 'tis mostly on the weaker side;
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown
pride
Were shaken down and 'dogs had had
their day,'
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other
way,
And wax an ultra-royalist in loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic royalty.

XXIV

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd
my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of
Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

XXV

But *laissez aller*—knights and dames I
sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'Tis a
flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite:
The difficulty lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
With nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

XXVI

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the manners; manners now
make men—
Pinn'd like a flock, and fleeced too in their
fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold.
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place cos-
tume.

XXVII

We'll do our best to make the best on't:—
March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly,
yet flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be
arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen
utter.

We surely may find something worth re-
search:

Columbus found a new world in a
cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great ton-
nage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

XXVIII

When Adeline, in all her growing sense
Of Juan's merits and his situation,
Felt on the whole an interest intense,—
Partly perhaps because a fresh sensa-
tion,
Or that he had an air of innocence,
Which is for innocence a sad tempta-
tion—
As women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

XXIX

She had a good opinion of advice,
Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,
For which small thanks are still the market
price,
Even where the article at highest rate is:
She thought upon the subject twice or
thrice,
And morally decided, the best state is
For morals, marriage; and this question
carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

XXX

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;
But that, at present, with immediate refer-
ence
To his own circumstances, there might
lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

XXXI

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or
kin,
Arranging them like books on the same
shelf,
There's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 'tis no
sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason where-
fore.

XXXII

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in
her head

Some drama of the marriage unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and
bed
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out melodramas or pantomimes

XXXII

They generally have some only son
Some heir to a large property, some
friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom per-
haps might end
A line, and leave posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and be-
sides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of
brides.

XXXIV

From these they will be careful to select,
For this an heiress, and for that a
beauty;
For one a songstress who hath no defect,
For to'ther one who promises much duty;
For this a lady no one can reject,
Whose sole accomplishments were quite
a booty;
A second for her excellent connexions;
A third, because there can be no objec-
tions.

XXXV

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd
marriage
In his harmonious settlement—(which
flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without mis-
carriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than
it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which dis-
parage
What Nature naturally most encour-
ages)—
Why call'd he 'Harmony' a state sans
wedlock?
Now here I have got the preacher at a dead
lock.

XXXVI

Because he either meant to sneer at har-
mony
Or marriage, by divorcing them thus
oddly.
But whether reverend Rapp learn'd this in
Germany
Or no, 'tis said his sect is rich and godly,
Pious and pure, beyond what I can term
any
Of ours, although they propagate more
broadly.
My objection's to his title, not his ritual,
Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

XXXVII

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
Who favour, *malgré* Malthus, genera-
tion—
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
Of all the modest part of propagation;
Which after all at such a desperate rate
runs,
That half its produce tends to emigra-
tion,
That sad result of passions and potatoes—
Two weeds which pose our economic
Catos.

XXXVIII

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
I wish she had: his book's the eleventh
commandment,
Which says, 'Thou shalt not marry,' un-
less well:
This he (as far as I can understand)
meant.
'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell,
Nor canvass what 'so eminent a hand'
meant;
But certes it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

XXXIX

But Adeline, who probably presumed
That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or *separate* maintenance, in case 'twas
doom'd—
As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly
groom'd,
May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage—(which might form a
painter's fame,
Like Holbein's 'Dance of Death'—but
'tis the same);—

XL

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
In her own mind, and that's enough for
woman;
But then, with whom? There was the sage
Miss Reading,
Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman,
and Miss Knowman,
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
She deem'd his merits something more
than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
And might go on, if well wound up, like
watches.

XLI

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as
summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seem'd the cream of equanimity,
Till skimm'd—and then there was some
milk and water,

With a slight shade of blue too, it might be
 Beneath the surface; but what did it
 matter?
 Love's riotous, but marriage should have
 quiet,
 And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

XLII

And then there was the Miss Audacia
 Shoestring,
 A dashing *demoiselle* of good estate,
 Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue
 string;
 But whether English dukes grew rare of
 late,
 Or that she had not harp'd upon the true
 string,
 By which such sirens can attract our great,
 She took up with some foreign younger
 brother,
 A Russ or Turk—the one's as good as
 t'other.

XLIII

And then there was—but why should I go
 on,
 Unless the ladies should go off?—there
 was
 Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
 Of the best class, and better than her
 class,—
 Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
 O'er life, too sweet an image for such
 glass,
 A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
 A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

XLIV

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
 Child to the care of guardians good and
 kind;
 But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
 Blood is not water; and where shall we
 find
 Feelings of youth like those which over-
 thrown lie
 By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
 To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
 Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

XLV

Early in years, and yet more infantine
 In figure, she had something of sublime
 In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs'
 shine.
 All youth—but with an aspect beyond
 time;
 Radiant and grave—as pitying man's de-
 cline;
 Mournful—but mournful of another's
 crime,
 She look'd as if she sat by Eden's door,
 And grieved for those who could return no
 more.

XLVI

She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere,
 As far as her own gentle heart allow'd,
 And deem'd that fallen worship far more
 dear
 Perhaps because 'twas fallen: her aires
 were proud
 Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the
 ear
 Of nations, and had never bent or bow'd
 To novel power; and as she was the last,
 She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

XLVII

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
 As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
 As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
 And kept her heart serene within its
 zone.
 There was awe in the homage which she
 drew;
 Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
 Apart from the surrounding world, and
 strong
 In its own strength—most strange in one
 so young!

XLVIII

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
 Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
 Although her birth and wealth had given
 her vogue,
 Beyond the charmers we have already
 cited;
 Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
 Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
 By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
 Of single gentlemen who would be double.

XLIX

And this omission, like that of the bust
 Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
 Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
 This he express'd half smiling and half
 serious;
 When Adeline replied with some disgust,
 And with an air, to say the least, im-
 perious,
 She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
 As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?'

L

Juan rejoin'd—'She was a Catholic,
 And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
 Since he was sure his mother would fall
 sick,
 And the Pope thunder excommunication,
 If——' But here Adeline, who seem'd to
 pique
 Herself extremely on the inoculation
 Of others with her own opinions, stated—
 As usual—the same reason which she late
 did.

LI

And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way's certainly to tease on,
And amplify: you lose much by con-
cision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or—what is just the same—it wearies out.
So the end's gain'd, what signifies the
route?

LII

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice—
For prejudice it was—against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
With all the added charm of form and
feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
But nature's nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

LIII

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
With which Aurora on those baubles
look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier
day:
For there are few things by mankind less
brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
Than finding thus their genius stand
rebuked,
Like 'Antony's by Cæsar,' by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

LIV

It was not envy—Adeline had none;
Her place was far beyond it, and her
mind.
It was not scorn—which could not light on
one
Whose greatest *fault* was leaving few to
find.
It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the *ignes fatui* of mankind.
It was not—but 'tis easier far, alas!
To say what it was *not* than what it was.

Little Aurora deem'd she was the theme
Of such discussion. She was there a
guest;
A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than
the rest,
Which flow'd on for a moment in the beam
Time sheds a moment o'er each spark-
ling crest.
Had she known this, she would have
calmly smiled—
She had so much, or little, of the child.

LVI

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her
blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow-
worm shine,
Then turn'd unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world's ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on fea-
ture.

LVII

His fame too,—for he had that kind of fame
Which sometimes plays the deuce with
womankind,
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being com-
bined;
Faults which attract because they are not
tame;
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they
blind:—
These seals upon her wax made no im-
pression,
Such was her coldness or her self-posses-
sion.

LVIII

Juan knew nought of such a character—
High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
The island girl, bred up by the lone sea,
More warm, as lovely, and not less sin-
cere,
Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
Nor would be thus:—the difference in
them
Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

LIX

Having wound up with this sublime com-
parison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our
narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, 'I sound my
warison';
Scott, the superlative of my compara-
tive—
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight
or Saracen,
Serf, lord, man, with such skill as none
would share it, if
There had not been one Shakspeare and
Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

I say, in my slight way I may proceed
To play upon the surface of humanity.
I write the world, nor care if the world
read,
At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.

My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed

More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so—*now* I *know* it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet.

LXI

The conference or congress (for it ended
As congresses of late do) of the Lady
Adeline and Don Juan rather blended
Some acids with the sweets—for she was heady;

But, ere the matter could be marr'd or mended,

The silvery bell rang, not for 'dinner ready,'
But for that hour, call'd *half-hour*, given to dress,
Though ladies' robes seem scant enough for less.

LXII

Great things were now to be achieved at table,

With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer's able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)

To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks,

In soups or sauces, or a sole *ragoût*,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians, brew.

LXIII

There was a goodly '*soupe à la bonne femme*,'
Though God knows whence it came from; there was, too,

A turbot for relief of those who cram,
Relieved with '*dindon à la Périgieux*:'
There also was—the sinner that I am!
How shall I get this gourmand stanza through?—

'*Soupe à la Beauveau*,' whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

LXIV

But I must crowd all into one grand mess,
Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
Than when some squeamish people deem her frail;

But though a '*bonne vivante*,' I must confess

Her stomach's not her peccant part; this tale

However doth require some slight refec-tion,
Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

LXV

Fowls '*à la Condé*,' slices eke of salmon,
With '*sauces Gênévoises*,' and haunch of venison;

Wines, too, which might again have slain young Ammon—

A man like whom I hope we sha'n't see many soon;

They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,

Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;

And then there was champagne with foam-ing whirls,

As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.

LXVI

Then there was God knows what '*à l'Alle-mande*,'

'*A l'Espagnole*,' '*timballe*,' and '*sal-picon*'—

With things I can't withstand or under-stand,

Though swallow'd with much zest upon the whole;

And '*entremets*' to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;

While great Lucullus' *Rome triumphal* muffles—

(*There's fame*)—young partridge fillets,
deck'd with truffles.

LXVII

What are the *fillets* on the victor's brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch

Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?

Gone to where victories must like dinners go.

Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes—with your car-tridges,

When will your names lend lustre e'en to partridges?

LXVIII

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
Follow'd by '*petits puits d'amour*'—a dish

Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,

So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,

Which encyclopedise both flesh and fish;
But even sans *confitures*, it no less true is,

There's pretty picking in those *petits puits*.

LXIX

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expanded on two courses;

And indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces

Who would suppose, from Adam's simple
ration,

That cookery could have call'd forth
such resources,

As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of
nature?

LXX

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
The diners of celebrity dined well;

The ladies with more moderation mingled
In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;

Also the younger men too: for a springald
Can't, like ripe age, in *gourmandise* excel,

But thinks less of good eating than the
whisper

(When seated next him) of some pretty
lisper.

LXXI

Alas! I must leave undescribed the *gibier*,
The *salmi*, the *consommé*, the *purée*,

All which I use to make my rhymes run
glibber

Than could roast beef in our rough
John Bull way:

I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
'Bubble and squeak' would spoil my
liquid lay,

But I have dined, and must forego, alas!
The chaste description even of a 'bécasse';

LXXII

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
From nature for the service of the
gout—

Taste or the *gout*,—pronounce it as in-
clines

Your stomach? Ere you dine, the
French will do;

But *after*, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the
two.

Has *ever had the gout*? I have not had it—
But I may have, and you too, reader,

dread it.

LXXIII

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?

I must, although a favourite *plat* of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every-
where:

On them and bread 'twas oft my luck to dine,
The grass my table-cloth, in open air,

On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

LXXIV

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,

The guests were placed according to their
roll,

But various as the various meats dis-
play'd:

Don Juan sat next an 'à l'Espagnole'—
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said:
But so far like a lady, that 'twas drest
Superbly, and contain'd a world of zest.

LXXV

By some odd chance too, he was placed
between

Aurora and the Lady Adeline—

A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to
dine.

Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to
shine,

For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seem'd to look
through him.

LXXVI

I sometimes almost think that eyes have
ears:

This much is sure, that, out of earshot,
things

Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can't tell whence their know-
ledge springs.

Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one hears, so loudly though
it rings,

'Tis wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues—which pass'd without a
word!

LXXVII

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a *preux chevalier*—as it
ought:

Of all offences that's the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth
a thought.

Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught;

Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

LXXVIII

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as
urbanity

Required. Aurora scarcely look'd aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.

The devil was in the girl! Could it be
pride?

Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows! But Adeline's malicious
eyes

Sparkled with her successful prophecies,

LXXIX

And look'd as much as if to say, 'I said it';
A kind of triumph I'll not recommend,

Because it sometimes, as I have seen or
read it,

Both in the case of lover and of friend,

Will pique a gentleman, for his own credit,
To bring what was a jest to a serious end:
For all men prophesy what *is* or *was*,
And hate those who won't let them come
to pass.

LXXX

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to
express,
To females of perspicuous comprehen-
sions,
That he would rather make them more
than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than
So far relax'd her thoughts from their
sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

LXXXI

From answering she began to question:
this
With her was rare; and Adeline, who
as yet
Thought her predictions went not much
amiss,
Began to dread she'd thaw to a co-
quette—
So very difficult, they say, it is
To keep extremes from meeting, when
once set
In motion; but she here too much refined—
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

LXXXII

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what
females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact, too, temper'd him from grave to
gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or
free;
He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.

LXXXIII

Aurora, who in her indifference
Confounded him in common with the
crowd
Of flatterers, though she deem'd he had
more sense
Than whispering foplings, or than wit-
lings loud—
Commenced (from such slight things will
great commence)
To feel that flattery which attracts the
proud
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

LXXXIV

And then he had good looks;—that point
was carried
Nem. con. amongst the women, which I
grieve
To say leads oft to *crim. con.* with the
married—
A case which to the juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have
tarried.
Now though we know of old that looks
deceive,
And always have done, somehow these
good looks
Make more impression than the best of
books.

LXXXV

Aurora, who look'd more on books than
faces,
Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,
Has not the natural stays of strict old
age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Own'd to a *penchant*, though discreet, for
beauty.

LXXXVI

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,
But innocently so, as Socrates;
And really, if the sage sublime and Attic
At seventy years had phantasies like
these,
Which Plato in his dialogues dramatic
Has shown, I know not why they should
displease
In virgins—always in a modest way,
Observe; for that with me's a *sine quâ*.

LXXXVII

Also observe, that, like the great Lord Coke
(See Littleton), whene'er I have ex-
press'd
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third too, in a nook,
Or none at all—which seems a sorry jest:
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things exist-
ent?

LXXXVIII

If people contradict themselves, can I
Help contradicting them, and everybody,
Even my veracious self?—But that's a lie:
I never did so, never will—how should I?
He who doubts all things nothing can
deny:
Truth's fountains may be clear—her
streams are muddy,
And cut through such canals of contra-
diction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

LXXXIX

Apologue, fable, poesy, and parable,
Are false, but may be render'd also true,
By those who sow them in a land that's
arable.

'Tis wonderful what fable will not do!
'Tis said it makes reality more bearable:
But what's reality? Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No; she too much rejects.
Religion? Yes; but which of all her sects?

XC

Some millions must be wrong, that's
pretty clear;

Perhaps it may turn out that all were
right.
God help us! Since we have need on our
career

To keep our holy beacons always bright,
'Tis time that some new prophet should
appear,

Or *old* indulge man with a second sight.
Opinions wear out in some thousand
years,
Without a small refreshment from the
spheres.

XCI

But here again, why will I thus entangle
Myself with metaphysics? None can
hate

So much as I do any kind of wrangle;
And yet, such is my folly, or my fate,
I always knock my head against some
angle

About the present, past, or future state.
Yet I wish well to Trojan and to Tyrian,
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

XCII

But though I am a temperate theologian,
And also meek as a metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan
As Eldon on a lunatic commission,
In politics my duty is to show John
Bull something of the lower world's con-
dition.

It makes my blood boil like the springs of
Hecla,
To see men let these scoundrel sovereigns
break law.

XCIII

But politics, and policy, and piety,
Are topics which I sometimes introduce,
Not only for the sake of their variety,

But as subservient to a moral use;
Because my business is to *dress* society,
And stuff with *sage* that very verdant
goose.

And now, that we may furnish with some
matter all

Tastes, we are going to try the super-
natural.

XCIV

And now I will give up all argument;
And positively henceforth no tempta-
tion

Shall 'fool me to the top up of my bent';—
Yes, I'll begin a thorough reformation.

Indeed, I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse's conversa-
tion

Was dangerous;—I think she is as harm-
less

As some who labour more and yet may
charm less.

XCV

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
No; but you have heard—I understand
—be dumb!

And don't regret the time you may have
lost,

For you have got that pleasure still to
come:

And do not think I mean to sneer at most
Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mys-
terious:—

For certain reasons my belief is serious.

XCVI

Serious? You laugh;—you may. that will
I not;

My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
Exists—and where? That shall I not
recall,

Because I'd rather it should be forgot,
'Shadows the soul of Richard' may
appal.

In short, upon that subject I've some
qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malms-
bury.

XCVII

The night—(I sing by night—sometimes
an owl,

And now and then a *lightingale*)—is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me
scowl—

I wish to heaven they would not look so
grim;

The dying embers dwindle in the grate—
I think too that I have sat up too late:

XCVIII

And therefore, though 'tis by no means
my way

To rhyme at noon—when I have other
things

To think of, if I ever think—I say
I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,

And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
Treating a topic which, alas! but brings
Shadows;—but you must be in my con-
dition
Before you learn to call this superstition.

XCIX

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the hori-
zon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal
surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the
graves
Of empires heave but like some passing
waves.

CANTO THE SIXTEENTH

I

THE antique Persians taught three useful
things,
To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the
truth.
This was the mode of Cyrus, best of
kings—
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings,
Horses they ride without remorse or
ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less
clever,
But draw the long bow better now than
ever.

II

The cause of this effect, or this defect,—
'For this effect defective comes by
cause,'—
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate'er may be her follies or her flaws,
In some things, mine's beyond all contra-
diction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

III

And as she treats all things, and ne'er re-
treats
From anything, this epic will contain
A wilderness of the most rare conceits,
Which you might elsewhere hope to
find in vain.
'Tis true there be some bitters with the
sweets,
Yet mix'd so slightly, that you can't
complain,
But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
'*De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis.*'

IV

But of all truths which she has told, the
most
True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost—
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must
dwell?
'Tis time to strike such puny doubters
dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe
Columbus.

V

Some people would impose now with
authority,
Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's
Chronicle;
Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 'tis so. Who nibble, scribble,
quibble, he
Quiets at once with '*quia impossibile.*'

VI

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe:—if 'tis improbable, you *must*;
And if it is impossible, you *shall*:
'Tis always best to take things upon
trust.
I do not speak profanely, to recall
Those holier mysteries which the *wise*
and just
Receive as gospel, and which grow more
rooted,
As all truths must, the more they are dis-
puted:

VII

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
That in the course of some six thousand
years,
All nations have believed that from the
dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange
head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something
stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.

VIII

The dinner and the *soirée* too were done,
The supper too discuss'd, the dames
admired,
The banqueters had dropp'd off one by
one—
The song was silent, and the dance ex-
pired:

DON JUAN

[CANTO XVI

The last thin petticoats were vanish'd, gone
Like fleecy clouds into the sky retired,
And nothing brighter gleam'd through the
saloon
Than dying tapers—and the peeping moon.

IX

The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like the last glass of champagne,
without
The foam which made its virgin bumper
gay;
Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
Or like a soda bottle when its spray
Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
Or like a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;

X

Or like an opiate, which brings troubled
rest,
Or none; or like—like nothing that I
know
Except itself;—such is the human breast;
A thing, of which similitudes can show
No real likeness,—like the old Tyrian vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell
how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
So perish every tyrant's robe piece-meal!

XI

But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
Undressing is a woe; our *robe de
chambre*
May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear
than amber.
Titus exclaim'd, 'I've lost a day!' Of all
The nights and days most people can
remember,
(I have had of both, some not to be dis-
dain'd.)
I wish they'd state how many they have
gain'd.

XII

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
Felt restless, and perplex'd, and com-
promised:
He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more
bright
Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,
He probably would have philosophised;
A great resource to all, and ne'er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sigh'd.

XIII

He sigh'd;—the next resource is the full
moon,
Where all sighs are deposited; and now
It happen'd luckily, the chaste orb shone
As clear as such a climate will allow;

And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
To hail her with the apostrophe—'O
thou!'
Of amatory egotism the *Tuism*,
Which further to explain would be a truism.

XIV

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
Shepherd, or swain, whoever may be-
hold,
Feel some abstraction, when they gaze on
her;
Great thoughts we catch from thence
(besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather
err);
Deep secrets to her rolling light are
told;
The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she
sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

XV

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
For contemplation rather than his pil-
low:
The Gothic chamber, where he was en-
closed,
Let in the rippling sound of the lake's
billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused:
Below his window waved (of course) a
willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flash'd and after darken'd in the
shade.

XVI

Upon his table or his toilet,—*which*
Of these is not exactly ascertain'd,—
(I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
Of nicety, where a fact is to be gain'd,)
A lamp burn'd high, while he leant from
a niche,
Where many a Gothic ornament re-
main'd,
In chisell'd stone and painted glass, and
all
That time has left our fathers of their hall.

XVII

Then, as the night was clear though cold,
he threw
His chamber door wide open—and
went forth
Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
Long, furnish'd with old pictures of
great worth,
Of knights and dames heroic and chaste too,
As doubtless should be people of high
birth.
But by dim lights the portraits of the dead
Have something ghastly, desolate, and
dread.

XVIII

The forms of the grim knight and pictured saint
 Look living in the moon; and as you turn
 Backward and forward to the echoes faint
 Of your own footsteps—voices from the urn
 Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
 Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
 As if to ask how you can dare to keep
 A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

XIX

And the pale smile of beauties in the grave,
 The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
 Glimmer on high; their buried locks still wave
 Along the canvas; their eyes glance like dreams
 On ours, or spars within some dusky cave,
 But death is imaged in their shadowy beams.
 A picture is the past; even ere its frame
 Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

XX

As Juan mused on mutability,
 Or on his mistress—terms synonymous—
 No sound except the echo of his sigh
 Or step ran sadly through that antique house;
 When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
 A supernatural agent—or a mouse,
 Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
 Most people as it plays along the arras.

XXI

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk, array'd
 In cowl and beads, and dusky garb, appear'd,
 Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
 With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard;
 His garments only a slight murmur made;
 He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
 But slowly; and as he passed Juan by,
 Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

XXII

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
 Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
 But thought, like most men, there was nothing in't
 Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,

Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,
 Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
 But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.

And did he see this? or was it a vapour?

XXIII

Once, twice, thrice pass'd, repass'd—the thing of air,
 Or earth beneath, or heaven, or t'other place;
 And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,
 Yet could not speak or move; but, on its base
 As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
 Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
 He tax'd his tongue for words, which were not granted,
 To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

XXIV

The third time, after a still longer pause,
 The shadow pass'd away—but where? the hall
 Was long, and thus far there was no great cause
 To think his vanishing unnatural:
 Doors there were many, through which, by the laws
 Of physics, bodies whether short or tall
 Might come or go; but Juan could not state
 Through which the spectre seem'd to evaporate.

XXV

He stood—how long he knew not, but it seem'd
 An age—expectant, powerless, with his eyes
 Strain'd on the spot where first the figure gleam'd,
 Then by degrees recall'd his energies,
 And would have pass'd the whole off as a dream,
 But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,
 Waking already, and return'd at length
 Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength.

XXVI

All there was as he left it: still his taper
 Burnt, and not blue, as modest tapers use,
 Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
 He rubb'd his eyes, and they did not refuse
 Their office; he took up an old newspaper;
 The paper was right easy to peruse;
 He read an article the king attacking,
 And a long eulogy of 'patent blacking.'

XXVII

This savour'd of this world; but his hand
shook:

He shut his door, and after having read
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There, couch'd all snugly on his pillow's
nook,

With what he had seen his phantasy he
fed;
And though it was no opiate, slumber
crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

XXVIII

He woke betimes; and, as may be sup-
posed,
Ponder'd upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizz'd for superstition.
The more he thought, the more his mind
was posed;

In the mean time, his valet, whose pre-
cision
Was great, because his master brook'd no
less,
Knock'd to inform him it was time to
dress.

XXIX

He dress'd; and like young people he was
wont
To take some trouble with his toilet,
but
This morning rather spent less time upon 't;
Aside his very mirror soon was put;
His curls fell negligently o'er his front,
His clothes were not curb'd to their
usual cut,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was
tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one
side.

XXX

And when he walk'd down into the saloon,
He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discover'd
soon,
Had it not happen'd scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his
spoon;

So much *distract* he was, that all could see
That something was the matter—Adeline
The first—but *what* she could not well
divine.

XXXI

She look'd, and saw him pale, and turn'd
as pale
Herself; then hastily look'd down, and
mutter'd
Something, but what's not stated in my tale.
Lord Henry said, his muffin was ill-
butter'd;

The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke play'd with her
vell,
And look'd at Juan hard, but nothing
utter'd.

Aurora Raby with her large dark eyes
Survey'd him with a kind of calm surprise.

XXXII

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
And everybody wondering more or
less,
Fair Adeline inquired 'If he were ill?'
He started, and said, 'Yes—no—rather
—yes.'

The family physician had great skill,
And being present, now began to ex-
press
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell
The cause, but Juan said, 'He was quite
well.'

XXXIII

'Quite well; yes,—no.'—These answers
were mysterious,
And yet his looks appear'd to sanction
both,

However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden
growth
Weigh'd on his spirit, though by no means
serious:

But for the rest, as he himself seem'd
loth
To state the case, it might be ta'en for
granted
It was not the physician that he wanted.

XXXIV

Lord Henry, who had now discuss'd his
chocolate,
Also the muffin whereof he complain'd,
Said, Juan had not got his usual look
elate,
At which he marvell'd, since it had not
rain'd;

Then ask'd her Grace what news were of
the duke of late?

Her Grace replied, *his* Grace was rather
pain'd
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

XXXV

Then Henry turn'd to Juan, and address'd
A few words of condolence on his state:
'You look,' quoth he, 'as if you had had
your rest

Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late.'
'What Friar?' said Juan; and he did his
best

To put the question with an air sedate,
Or careless; but the effort was not valid
To hinder him from growing still more
pallid.

XXXVI

'Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?

The spirit of these walls?'—'In truth not I.'

'Why Fame—but Fame you know's sometimes a liar—

Tells an odd story, of which by and by: Whether with time the spectre has grown shyer,

Or that our sires had a more gifted eye For such sights, though the tale is half believed,

The Friar of late has not been oft perceived.

XXXVII

'The last time was——'—'I pray,' said Adeline—

(Who watch'd the changes of Don Juan's brow, And from its context thought she could divine

Connexions stronger than he chose to avow

With this same legend)—'if you but design To jest, you'll choose some other theme just now,

Because the present tale has oft been told, And is not much improved by growing old.

XXXVIII

'Jest!' quoth Milor; 'why, Adeline, you know

That we ourselves—'twas in the honey-moon—

Saw——'—'Well, no matter, 'twas so long ago;

But, come, I'll set your story to a tune.' Graceful as Dian when she draws her bow, She seiz'd her harp, whose strings were kindled soon

As touch'd, and plaintively began to play The air of 'Twas a Friar of Orders Gray.'

XXXIX

'But add the words,' cried Henry, 'which you made;

For Adeline is half a poetess,'

Turning round to the rest, he smiling said. Of course the others could not but express

In courtesy their wish to see display'd By one *three* talents, for there were no less—

The voice, the words, the harper's skill, at once,

Could hardly be united by a dunce.

XL

After some fascinating hesitation,—

The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,

I can't tell why, to this dissimulation,— Fair Adeline, with eyes fix'd on the ground

At first, then kindling into animation, Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,

And sang with much simplicity,—a merit Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it.

1

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar, Who sitteth by Norman stone, For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,

And his mass of the days that are gone. When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,

Made Norman Church his prey, And expell'd the friars, one friar still Would not be driven away.

2

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,

To turn church lands to lay, With sword in hand, and torch to light Their walls, if they said nay;

A monk remain'd, unchased, unchain'd, And he did not seem form'd of clay, For he's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church,

Though he is not seen by day.

3

And whether for good, or whether for ill, It is not mine to say;

But still with the house of Amundeville He abideth night and day.

By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said, He flits on the bridal eve;

And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death He comes—but not to grieve.

4

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn, And when aught is to befall

That ancient line, in the pale moonshine He walks from hall to hall.

His form you may trace, but not his face, 'Tis shadow'd by his cowl;

But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,

And they seem of a parted soul.

5

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar, He still retains his sway,

For he is yet the Church's heir, Whoever may be the lay.

Amundeville is lord by day,

But the monk is lord by night; Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal To question that friar's right.

6

Say nought to him as he walks the hall, And he'll say nought to you;

He sweeps along in his dusky pall, As o'er the grass the dew.

DON JUAN

[CANTO XVI

Then grammarcy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him! fair or foul,
And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

XLI

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling
wires
Died from the touch that kindled them
to sound;
And the pause follow'd, which when song
expires
Pervades a moment those who listen
round;
And then of course the circle much admires,
Nor less applaude, as in politeness bound,
The tones, the feeling, and the execution,
To the performer's diffident confusion.

XLII

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then, as 'twere *without*
display,
Yet *with* display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she *could*, if it were worth her
while.

XLIII

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was—pardon the pedantic illustration—
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater
pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion:
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoilt carpet—but the 'Attic bee'
Was much consoled by his own repartee.

XLIV

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade
(By doing easily, whene'er she chose,
What dilettanti do with vast parade)
Their sort of *half-profession*; for it grows
To something like this when too oft display'd;
And that it is so, everybody knows,
Who have heard Miss That or This, or
Lady T'other,
Show off—to please their company or
mother.

XLV

Oh! the long evenings of duets and trios!
The admirations and the speculations;
The 'Mamma Mia's!' and the 'Amor
Mio's!'
The 'Tanti palpiti's' on such occasions:

The 'Lasciami's,' and quavering 'Ad-
dio's!'
Amongst our own most musical of
nations;
With 'Tu mi chamas's' from Portingale,
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

XLVI

In Babylon's *bravuras*—as the home
Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Gray
Highlands,
That bring Lochaber back to eyes that
roam
O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures of music which o'ercome
All mountaineers with dreams that they
are nigh lands,
No more to be beheld but in such visions—
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

XLVII

She also had a twilight tinge of 'Blue,'
Could write rhymes, and compose more
than she wrote,
Made epigrams occasionally too
Upon her friends, as everybody ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote;
Was weak enough to deem Pope a great
poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to
show it.

XLVIII

Aurora—since we are touching upon taste,
Which now-a-days is the thermometer
By whose degrees all characters are
class'd—
Was more Shakspearian, if I do not err.
The worlds beyond this world's perplex-
ing waste
Had more of her existence, for in her
There was a depth of feeling to embrace
Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too
as Space.

XLIX

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless
Grace,
The full-grown Hebe of Fitz-Fulke,
whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon,—but that's not much;
we find
Few females without some such gentle
leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in
heaven.

L

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
Though once she was seen reading the
Bath Guide,
And Hayley's *Triumphs*, which she deem'd
pathetic,

Because she said *her temper* had been
tried
So much, the bard had really been prophetic
Of what she had gone through with—
since a bride.
But of all verse, what most insured her
praise
Were sonnets to herself, or *bouts rimés*.

LI

'Twere difficult to say what was the object
Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
To bear on what appear'd to her the subject

Of Juan's nervous feelings on that day.
Perhaps she merely had the simple project
To laugh him out of his supposed dismay;
Perhaps she might wish to confirm him
in it,
Though why I cannot say—at least this
minute.

LII

But so far the immediate effect
Was to restore him to his self-propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
Who wish to take the tone of their
society:

In which you cannot be too circumspect,
Whether the mode be persiflage or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
On pain of much displeasing the gynecracy.

LIII

And therefore Juan now began to rally
His spirits, and without more explanation
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
Her Grace, too, also seized the same
occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
But wish'd for a still more detail'd
narration
Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,
About the present family's deaths and
woosings.

LIV

Of these few could say more than has been
said;
They pass'd as such things do, for
superstition
With some, while others, who had more
in dread
The theme, half credited the strange
tradition;
And many was talk'd on all sides on that
head:
But Juan, when cross-question'd on the
vision,
Which some supposed (though he had not
avow'd it)
Had stirr'd him, answer'd in a way to
cloud it.

LV

And then, the mid-day having worn to
one,
The company prepared to separate;
Some to their several pastimes, or to none,
Some wondering 'twas so early, some
so late.
There was a goodly match too, to be run
Between some greyhounds on my lord's
estate,
And a young race-horse of old pedigree,
Match'd for the spring, whom several
went to see.

LVI

There was a picture-dealer who had
brought
A special Titian, warranted original,
So precious that it was not to be bought,
Though princes the possessor were
besieging all.
The king himself had cheapen'd it, but
thought
The civil list he deigns to accept (oblig-
ing all
His subjects by his gracious acceptance)—
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

LVII

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur,—
The friend of artists, if not arts,—the
owner,
With motives the most classical and pure,
So that he would have been the very
donor,
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
So much he deem'd his patronage an
honour,
Had brought the *capo d'opera*, not for sale,
But for his judgment—never known to fail.

LVIII

There was a modern Goth, I mean a
Gothic
Bricklayer of Babel, call'd an architect,
Brought to survey these grey walls, which
though so thick,
Might have from time acquired some
slight defect;
Who, after rummaging the Abbey through
thick
And thin, produced a plan whereby to
erect
New buildings of correctest conformation,
And throw down old, which he call'd
restoration.

LIX

The cost would be a trifle—an 'old song,'
Set to some thousands ('tis the usual
burden
Of that same tune, when people hum it
long)—
The price would speedily repay its
worth in

DON JUAN

[CANTO XVI]

An edifice no less sublime than strong,
By which Lord Henry's good taste
would go forth in
Its glory, through all ages shining sunny,
For Gothic darings shown in English money.

LX

There were two lawyers busy on a
mortgage
Lord Henry wish'd to raise for a new
purchase;
Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,
And one on tithes, which sure are
Discord's torches,
Kindling Religion till she throws down
her gage,
'Untying' squires 'to fight against the
churches';
There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and
ploughman,
For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

LXI

There were two poachers caught in a steel
trap,
Ready for gaol, their place of con-
valescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to
see, since—
Since—since—in youth, I had the sad
mishap—
But luckily I have paid few parish fees
since):
That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with
rigour
Presents the problem of a double figure.

LXII

A reel within a bottle is a mystery,
One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;
Therefore the present piece of natural
history
I leave to those who are fond of solving
doubt;
And merely state, though not for the con-
sistory,
Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
Had bagg'd this poacher upon Nature's
manor.

LXIII

Now justices of peace must judge all pieces
Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the
game
And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a licence for the
dalliance;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenchers
Are puzzles to the most precautionous
benches.

LXIV

The present culprit was extremely pale,
Pale as if painted so; her cheek being red
By nature, as in higher dames less hale
'Tis white, at least when they just rise
from bed.
Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail,
Poor soul! for she was country born
and bred,
And knew no better in her immorality
Than to wax white—for blushes are for
quality.

LXV

Her black, bright, downcast, yet *espiègle*
eye,
Had gather'd a large tear into its corner,
Which the poor thing at times essay'd to
dry,
For she was not a sentimental mourner
Parading all her sensibility,
Nor insolent enough to scorn the
scorner,
But stood in trembling, patient tribula-
tion,
To be call'd up for her examination.

LXVI

Of course these groups were scatter'd here
and there,
Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent.
The lawyers in the study; and in air
The prize pig, ploughman, poachers;
the men sent
From town, viz. architect and dealer, were
Both busy (as a general in his tent
Writing despatches) in their several
stations,
Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
While Scout, the parish guardian of the
frail,
Discuss'd (he hated beer yclept the
'small')
A mighty mug of *moral* double ale.
She waited until Justice could recall
Its kind attentions to their proper pale,
To name a thing in nomenclature rather
Perplexing for most virgins—a child's
father.

LXVII

You see here was enough of occupation
For the Lord Henry, link'd with dogs
and horses.
There was much bustle too, and prepara-
tion
Below stairs on the score of second
courses;
Because, as suits their rank and situation,
Those who in counties have great land
resources

Have 'public days,' when all men may
carouse,
Though not exactly what's call'd 'open
house.'

LXIX

But once a week or fortnight, *uninvited*
(Thus we translate a *general invitation*),
All country gentlemen, esquired or
knighted,
May drop in without cards, and take
their station
At the full board, and sit alike delighted
With fashionable wines and conversa-
tion;
And, as the isthmus of the grand con-
nexion,
Talk o'er themselves the past and next
election.

LXX

Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for boroughs like a rat or
rabbit.
But county contests cost him rather
dearer,
Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl
of Giftgabbit
Had English influence, in the self-same
sphere here;
His son, the Honourable Dick Diced-
rabbit,
Was member for the 'other interest'
(meaning
The same self-interest, with a different
leaning).

LXXI

Courteous and cautious therefore in his
county,
He was all things to all men, and
dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all—which last com-
menced
To gather to a somewhat large amount,
he
Not calculating how much they con-
densed;
But what with keeping some, and break-
ing others,
His word had the same value as another's.

LXXII

A friend to freedom and freeholders—yet
No less a friend to government—he
held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism—albeit
compell'd,
Such was his sovereign's pleasure, (though
unfit,
He added modestly, when rebels rail'd,)
To hold some sinecures he wish'd abolish'd,
But that with them all law would be
demolish'd.

LXXIII

He was 'free to confess'—(whence comes
this phrase?
Is't English? No—'tis only parlia-
mentary)
That innovation's spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the
last century.
He would not tread a factious path to
praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to
venture high;
As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

LXXIV

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a
private life
Had ever been his sole and whole
ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of
strife,
Which threaten'd the whole country
with perdition?
When demagogues would with a butcher's
knife
Cut through and through (oh! damnable
incision!)
The Gordian or the Geordi-an knot,
whose strings
Have tied together commons, lords, and
kings.

LXXV

Sooner 'come Place into the Civil List
And champion him to the utmost—'
he would keep it,
Till duly disappointed or dismiss'd:
Profit he cared not for, let others reap
it;
But should the day come when place
ceased to exist,
The country would have far more cause
to weep it:
For how could it go on? Explain who
can!
He gloried in the name of Englishman.

LXXVI

He was as independent—ay, much more—
Than those who were not paid for
independence,
As common soldiers, or a common—
shore,
Have in their several arts or parts
ascendence
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,
Who do not give professional atten-
dance.
Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager
To prove their pride, as footmen to a
beggar.

LXXVII

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,
And thought. I say no more—I've said
too much;

For all of us have either heard or read—
Off—or upon the hustings—some slight
such

Hints from the independent heart or head
Of the official candidate. I'll touch
No more on this—the dinner-bell hath
rung.

And grace is said; the grace I *should* have
sung—

LXXVIII

But I'm too late, and therefore must make
play.

'Twas a great banquet, such as Albion
old

Was wont to boast—as if a glutton's tray
Were something very glorious to behold.

But 'twas a public feast and public day,—
Quite full, right dull, guests hot, and
dishes cold,

Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And everybody out of their own sphere.

LXXIX

The squires familiarly formal, and
My lords and ladies proudly con-
descending;

The very servants puzzling how to hand
Their plates—without it might be too
much bending

From their high places by the sideboard's
stand—

Yet, like their master's, fearful of
offending.

For any deviation from the graces
Might cost both man and master too—
their places.

LXXX

There were some hunters bold, and
coursers keen,

Whose hounds ne'er err'd, nor grey-
hounds deign'd to lurch;

Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers, seen
Earliest to rise, and last to quit the search
Of the poor partridge through his stubble
screen.

There were some massy members of the
church,

Takers of tithes, and makers of good
matches,

And several who sung fewer psalms than
catches.

LXXXI

There were some country wags too—and,
alas!

Some exiles from the town, who had
been driven

To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,
And rise at nine in lieu of long eleven.

And lo! upon that day it came to pass,
I sate next that o'erwhelming son of
heaven,

The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,
The loudest wit I e'er was deafen'd with.

LXXXII

I knew him in his livelier London days,
A brilliant diner-out, though but a
curate;

And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,
Until preferment, coming at a sure rate,
(O Providence! how wondrous are thy ways!

Who would suppose thy gifts some-
times obdurate?)

Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er
Lincoln,

A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

LXXXIII

His jokes were sermons, and his sermons
jokes;

But both were thrown away amongst
the fens;

For wit hath no great friend in aguish folks.
No longer ready ears and short-hand
pens

Imbided the gay *bon-mot*, or happy hoax:
The poor priest was reduced to com-
mon sense,

Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a hoarse laugh from the thick
throng.

LXXXIV

There *is* a difference, says the song, 'be-
tween

A beggar and a queen,' or *was* (of late
The latter worse used of the two we've
seen—

But we'll say nothing of affairs of
state);

A difference 'twixt a bishop and a dean,'
A difference between crockery ware and
plate,

As between English beef and Spartan
broth—

And yet great heroes have been bred by
both.

LXXXV

But of all nature's discrepancies, none
Upon the whole is greater than the
difference

Beheld between the country and the town,
Of which the latter merits every preference

From those who have few resources of
their own,

And only think, or act, or feel, with
reference

To some small plan of interest or ambi-
tion—

Both which are limited to no condition.

LXXXVI

But *En avant!* The light loves languish
o'er

Long banquets and too many guests,
although
A slight repast makes people love much
more,

Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know,
Even from our grammar upwards, friends
of yore

With vivifying Venus, who doth owe
To these the invention of champagne and
truffles:

Temperance delights her, but long fasting
ruffles.

LXXXVII

Dully pass'd o'er the dinner of the day;
And Juan took his place, he knew not
where,

Confused, in the confusion, and *distrain*,
And sitting as if nail'd upon his chair:
Though knives and forks clang'd round
as in a fray,

He seem'd unconscious of all passing
there,

Till some one, with a groan, express a wish
(Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

LXXXVIII

On which, at the *third* asking of the banns,
He started; and perceiving smiles around
Broadening to grins, he colour'd more
than once,

And hastily—as nothing can confound
A wise man more than laughter from a
dunce—

Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound,
And with such hurry, that, ere he could
curb it,

He had paid his neighbour's prayer with
half a turbot.

LXXXIX

This was no bad mistake, as it occur'd,
The supplicator being an amateur;

But others, who were left with scarce a
third,

Were angry—as they well might, to be
sure.

They wonder'd how a young man so absurd
Lord Henry at his table should endure;
And this, and his not knowing how much
oats

Had fall'n last market, cost his host three
votes.

XC

They little knew, or might have sympa-
thised,

That he the night before had seen a
ghost,

A prologue which but slightly harmonised
With the substantial company engross'd

By matter, and so much materialised,
That one scarce knew at what to marvel
most

Of two things—*how* (the question rather
odd is)

Such bodies could have souls, or souls
such bodies.

XCI

But what confused him more than smile or
stare,

From all the 'squires and 'squiresses
around,

Who wonder'd at the abstraction of his air,
Especially as he had been renown'd

For some vivacity among the fair,
Even in the country circle's narrow
bound—

(For little things upon my lord's estate
Were good small talk for others still less
great)—

XCII

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her
cheek.

Now this he really rather took amiss;
In those who rarely smile, their smile
bespeaks

A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to
pique,

Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies'
smiles.

XCIII

'Twas a mere quiet smile of contempla-
tion,

Indicative of some surprise and pity;
And Juan grew carnation with vexation,
Which was not very wise, and still less
witty,

Since he had gain'd at least her observa-
tion,

A most important outwork of the city—
As Juan should have known, had not his
senses

By last night's ghost been driven from
their defences.

XCIV

But what was bad, she did not blush in
turn,

Nor seem embarrass'd—quite the con-
trary;

Her aspect was as usual, still—not stern—
And she withdrew, but cast not down,
her eye,

Yet grew a little pale—with what? con-
cern?

I know not; but her colour ne'er was
high—

Though sometimes faintly flush'd—and
always clear,

As deep seas in a sunny atmosphere.

xcv

But Adeline was occupied by fame
 This day; and watching, witching, con-
 descending
 To the consumers of fish, fowl, and game,
 And dignity with courtesy so blending,
 As all must blend whose part it is to aim
 (Especially as the sixth year is ending)
 At their lord's, son's, or similar con-
 nexion's
 Safe conduct through the rocks of re-
 elections.

xcvi

Though this was most expedient on the
 whole,
 And usual—Juan, when he cast a glance
 On Adeline while playing her grand *rôle*,
 Which she went through as though it
 were a dance,
 Betraying only now and then her soul
 By a look scarce perceptibly askance
 (Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
 Some doubt how much of Adeline was
real;

xcvii

So well she acted all and every part
 By turns—with that vivacious versatility,
 Which many people take for want of
 heart.
 They err—'tis merely what is call'd
 mobility,
 A thing of temperament and not of art,
 Though seeming so, from its supposed
 facility;
 And false—though true; for surely they're
 sincerest
 Who are strongly acted on by what is
 nearest.

xcviii

This makes your actors, artists, and
 romancers,
 Heroes sometimes, though seldom—
 sages never:
 But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and
 dancers,
 Little that's great, but much of what is
 clever;
 Most orators, but very few financiers,
 Though all Exchequer chancellors
 endeavour,
 Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's
 rigours,
 And grow quite figurative with their
 figures.

xcix

The poets of arithmetic are they
 Who, though they prove not two and
 two to be
 Five, as they might do in a modest way,
 Have plainly made it out that four are
 three,

Judging by what they take, and what they
 pay.
 The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
 That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
 The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

While Adeline dispensed her airs and
 graces,
 The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much
 at ease;
 Though too well bred to quiz men to their
 faces,
 Her laughing blue eyes with a glance
 could seize
 The ridicules of people in all places—
 That honey of your fashionable bees—
 And store it up for mischievous enjoy-
 ment;
 And this at present was her kind employ-
 ment.

ci

However, the day closed, as days must
 close;
 The evening also waned—and coffee
 came.
 Each carriage was announced, and ladies
 rose,
 And curtsying off, as curtsies country
 dame,
 Retired: with most unfashionable bows
 Their docile esquires also did the same,
 Delighted with their dinner and their host,
 But with the Lady Adeline the most.

cii

Some praised her beauty: others her great
 grace;
 The warmth of her politeness, whose
 sincerity
 Was obvious in each feature of her face,
 Whose traits were radiant with the rays
 of verity.
 Yes: *she* was truly worthy *her* high place!
 No one could envy her deserved
 prosperity.
 And then her dress—what beautiful
 simplicity
 Draperied her form with curious felicity!

ciii

Meanwhile sweet Adeline deserved their
 praises,
 By an impartial indemnification
 For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
 In a most edifying conversation,
 Which turn'd upon their late guests'
 miens and faces,
 And families, even to the last relation;
 Their hideous wives, their horrid selves
 and dresses,
 And truculent distortion of their tresses.

CIV

True, *she* said little—'twas the rest that
broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 'twas to the purpose what she
spoke:
Like Addison's 'faint praise,' so wont
to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.
How sweet the task to shield an absent
friend!
I ask but this of mine, to—not defend.

CV

There were but two exceptions to this keen
Skirmish of wits o'er the departed; one
Aurora, with her pure and placid mien;
And Juan, too, in general behind none
In gay remark on what he had heard or
seen,
Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone:
In rally, he heard the others rail or rally,
He would not join them in a single sally.

CVI

'Tis true he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence; she perhaps
mistook
Its motive for that charity we owe
But seldom pay the absent, nor would
look
Farther; it might or it might not be so.
But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,
Observing little in his reverie,
Yet saw this much, which he was glad to
see.

The ghost at least had done him this much
good,
In making him as silent as a ghost,
If in the circumstances which ensued
He gain'd esteem where it was worth
the most;
And certainly Aurora had renew'd
In him some feelings he had lately lost,
Or harden'd; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine, that I must deem them
real:—

CVIII

The love of higher things and better days;
The unbounded hope, and heavenly
ignorance
Of what is call'd the world, and the world's
ways;
The moments when we gather from a
glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
Which kindle manhood, but can ne'er
entrance
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

CIX

Who would not sigh *Αἶ αἶ τῶν Κυθέρων*
That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?
Alas! *her* star must fade like that of Dian:
Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart.
Anacreon only had the soul to tie an
Unwithering myrtle round the un-
blunted dart
Of Eros: but though thou hast play'd us
many tricks,
Still we respect thee, '*Alma Venus Gene-
trix!*'

CX

And full of sentiments, sublime as billows
Heaving between this world and worlds
beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of
pillows
Arrived, retired to his; but to despond
Rather than rest. Instead of poppies,
willows
Waved o'er his couch; he meditated,
fond
Of those sweet bitter thoughts which
banish sleep,
And make the worldling sneer, the young-
ling weep.

CXI

The night was as before: he was undrest,
Saving his night-gown, which is an
undress;
Completely *sans culotte*, and without
vest;
In short, he hardly could be clothed with
less:
But apprehensive of his spectral guest,
He sate with feelings awkward to
express
(By those who have not had such visita-
tions),
Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

CXII

And not in vain he listen'd;—Hush!
what's that?
I see—I see—Ah, no!—'tis not—yet 'tis—
Ye powers! it is the—the—the—Pooh!
the cat!
The devil may take that stealthy pace
of his!
So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,
Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,
Gliding the first time to a *rendezvous*,
And dreading the chaste echoes of her
shoe.

CXIII

Again—what is't? The wind? No, no,—
this time
It is the sable Friar as before,
With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,
Or (as rhymes may be in these days)
much more.

Again through shadows of the night sub-
 lime,
 When deep sleep fall on men, and the
 world wore
 The starry darkness round her like a girdle
 Spangled with gems—the monk made his
 blood curdle.

CXIV

A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass,
 Which sets the teeth on edge; and a
 slight clatter
 Like showers which on the midnight gusts
 will pass,
 Sounding like very supernatural water,
 Came over Juan's ear, which throb'd, alas!
 For immaterialism's a serious matter;
 So that even those whose faith is the most
 great
 In souls immortal, shun them *tête-à-tête*.

CXV

Were his eyes open?—Yes! and his mouth
 too.
 Surprise has this effect—to make one
 dumb,
 Yet leave the gate which eloquence slips
 through
 As wide, as if a long speech were to
 come.
 Nigh and more nigh the awful echoes
 drew,
 Tremendous to a mortal tympanum:
 His eyes were open, and (as was before
 Stated) his mouth. What open'd next?—
 the door.

CXVI

It open'd with a most infernal creak,
 Like that of hell. 'Lasciate ogni
 speranza
 Voi ch' entrate!' The hinge seem'd to
 speak,
 Dreadful as Dante's rima, or this
 stanza;
 Or—but all words upon such themes are
 weak:
 A single shade's sufficient to entrance a
 Hero—for what is substance to a spirit?
 Or how is't *matter* trembles to come near
 it?

CXVII

The door flew wide, not swiftly,—but, as
 fly
 The sea-gulls, with a steady, sober
 flight—
 And then swung back; nor close—but
 stood awry,
 Half letting in long shadows on the
 light,
 Which still in Juan's candlesticks burn'd
 high,
 For he had two, both tolerably bright,

And in the doorway, darkening darkness,
 stood
 The sable Friar in his solemn hood.

CXVIII

Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
 The night before; but being sick of
 shaking,
 He first inclined to think he had been mis-
 taken;
 And then to be ashamed of such
 mistaking;
 His own internal ghost began to awaken
 Within him, and to quell his corporal
 quaking—
 Hinting that soul and body on the whole
 Were odds against a disembodied soul.

CXIX

And then his dread grew wrath, and his
 wrath fierce,
 And he arose, advanced—the shade
 retreated;
 But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
 Followed, his veins no longer cold, but
 heated,
 Resolved to thrust the mystery *carte* and
 tierce,
 At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
 The ghost stopp'd, menaced, then retired,
 until
 He reach'd the ancient wall, then stood
 stone still.

CXX

Juan put forth one arm—Eternal powers!
 It touch'd no soul, nor body, but the
 wall,
 On which the moonbeams fell in silvery
 showers,
 Chequer'd with all the tracery of the
 hall;
 He shudder'd, as no doubt the bravest
 cowers
 When he can't tell what 'tis that doth
 appal.
 How odd, a single hobgoblin's nonentity
 Should cause more fear than a whole
 host's identity!

CXXI

But still the shade remain'd: the blue eyes
 glared,
 And rather variably for stony death;
 Yet one thing rather good the grave had
 spared,
 The ghost had a remarkably sweet
 breath:
 A straggling curl show'd he had been
 fairhair'd;
 A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,
 Gleam'd forth, as through the casement's
 ivy shroud
 The moon peep'd, just escaped from a
 grey cloud.

CXXII

And Juan, puzzled, but still curious,
thrust

His other arm forth—Wonder upon
wonder!

It press'd upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm
heart under.

He found, as people on most trials must,
That he had made at first a silly blunder,

And that in his confusion he had
caught

Only the wall, instead of what he
sought.

CXXIII

The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet
soul

As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood:
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole

Forth into something much like flesh
and blood;

Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,
And they reveal'd—alas! that e'er they
should!

In full, voluptuous, but *not* o'ergrown
bulk,

The phantom of her frolic Grace—Fitz-
Fulke!

NOTES

HOURS OF IDLENESS

Page 2, col. 1.

'ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY.' The author claims the indulgence of the reader more for this piece than, perhaps, any other in the collection; but as it was written at an earlier period than the rest (being composed at the age of fourteen), and his first essay, he preferred submitting it to the indulgence of his friends in its present state, to making either addition or alteration.

Page 3, col. 2.

'On Marston.' The battle of Marston Moor, where the adherents of Charles I. were defeated.

Page 3, col. 2.

'With Rupert, 'gainst traitors contending.' Son of the Elector Palatine, and nephew to Charles I. He afterwards commanded the fleet in the reign of Charles II.

Page 9, col. 1.

TO THE DUKE OF DORSET.] In looking over my papers to select a few additional poems for this second edition, I found the above lines, which I had totally forgotten, composed in the summer of 1805, a short time previous to my departure from Harrow. They were addressed to a young school-fellow of high rank, who had been my frequent companion in some rambles through the neighbouring country; however, he never saw the lines, and most probably never will. As, on a re-perusal, I found them not worse than some other pieces in the collection, I have now published them, for the first time, after a slight revision.

Page 9, col. 1.

'Bade thee obey, and gave me to command.'] At every public school the junior boys are completely subservient to the upper forms till they attain a seat in the higher classes. From this state of probation, very properly, no rank is exempt; but after a certain period, they command in turn those who succeed.

Page 9, col. 1.

'Though passive tutors, fearful to dispraise.'] Allow me to disclaim any personal allusions, even the most distant. I merely mention generally what is too often the weakness of preceptors.

Page 10, col. 2.

'Oh! could Le Sage's demon's gift.'] The Diabole Boiteux of Le Sage, where Asmodeus, the demon, places Don Cleofas on an elevated situation, and unroofs the houses for inspection.

Page 11, col. 1.

'Who reads false quantities in Seale.'] Seale's publication on Greek Metres displays considerable talent and ingenuity, but, as might be expected in so difficult a work, is not remarkable for accuracy.

Page 11, col. 1.

'In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle.'] The Latin of the schools is of the canine species, and not very intelligible.

Page 11, col. 1.

'The square of the hypothenuse.'] The discovery of Pythagoras, that the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides of a right-angled triangle.

Page 11, col. 1.

'A numerous crowd, array'd in white.'] On a saint's day the students wear surplices in chapel.

Page 12, col. 1.

'I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone.'] Mossop, a contemporary of Garrick, famous for his performance of Zanga.

Page 12, col. 2.

'Would twinkle dimly through their sphere.']

'Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do intreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.'

SHAKESPEARE.

Page 12, col. 2.

'Woman, thy vows are traced in sand.'] The last line is almost a literal translation from a Spanish proverb.

Page 13, col. 2.

'And hurtling o'er thy lovely head.'] This word is used by Gray in his poem to the Fatal Sisters:—

'Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurries in the darken'd air.'

Page 14, col. 2.

'In law an infant, and in years a boy.'] In law every person is an infant who has not attained the age of twenty-one.

Page 15, col. 2.

'To form the place of assignation.'] In the above little piece the author has been accused by some candid readers of introducing the name of a lady from whom he was some hundred miles distant at the time this was written; and poor Juliet, who has slept so long in 'the tomb of all the Capulets,' has been converted, with a trifling alteration of her name, into an English damsel walking in a garden of their own creation, during the month of December, in a village where the author never passed a winter. Such has been the candour of some ingenious critics. He would advise these liberal commentators on taste and arbiters of decorum to read *Shakespeare*.

Page 16, col. 1.

'But curse my fate for ever after.'] Having heard that a very severe and indelicate censure has been passed on the above poem, I beg leave to reply in a quotation from an admired work, 'Carr's Stranger in France:—'As we were contemplating a painting on a large scale, in which, among other figures, is the uncovered whole length of a warrior, a prudish-looking lady, who seemed to have touched the age of desperation, after having attentively surveyed it through her glass, observed to her party, that there was a great deal of indecorum

NOTES TO HOURS OF IDLENESS

in that picture. Madame S. shrewdly whispered in my ear "that the indecorum was in the remark."

Page 16, col. 1.

'OSCAR OF ALVA.' The catastrophe of this tale was suggested by the story of 'Jeronymo and Lorenzo,' in the first volume of Schiller's 'Armenian, or the Ghost-Seer.' It also bears some resemblance to a scene in the third act of 'Macbeth.'

Page 21, col. 2.

'Creusa's style but wanting to the dame.' The mother of Iulus, lost on the night when Troy was taken.

Page 24, col. 2.

'Ah! hapless dame! no sire bewails.' Medea, who accompanied Jason to Corinth, was deserted by him for the daughter of Creon, king of that city. The chorus, from which this is taken, here addresses Medea; though a considerable liberty is taken with the original, by expanding the idea, as also in some other parts of the translation.

Page 24, col. 2.

'Who ne'er unlocks with silver key.' The original is 'Καθάρην ἀνοίξαντι κλειδίρα φρενῶν;' literally 'disclosing the bright key of the mind.'

Page 24, col. 2.

'MAGNUS his ample front sublime uprears.' No reflection is here intended against the person mentioned under the name of Magnus. He is merely represented as performing an unavoidable function of his office. Indeed, such an attempt could only recoil upon myself; as that gentleman is now as much distinguished by his eloquence, and the dignified propriety with which he fills his situation, as he was in his younger days for wit and conviviality.

Page 25, col. 1.

'Th' ATHENIAN's glowing style, or Tully's fire.' Demosthenes.

Page 25, col. 2.

'Yet prizing Bentley's, Brunck's, or Porson's note.' The present Greek professor at Trinity College, Cambridge; a man whose powers of mind and writings may, perhaps, justify their preference.

Page 25, col. 2.

'Whether 'tis Pitt or Petty rules the hour.' Since this was written, Lord Henry Petty [now Marquis of Lansdowne] has lost his place, and subsequently (I had almost said consequently) the honour of representing the University. A fact so glaring requires no comment.

Page 28, col. 1.

'Sweet scene of my youth! seat of Friendship and Truth.' Harrow.

Page 29, col. 2.

'LACHIN Y GAIR.' *Lachin y Gair*, or, as it is pronounced in the Erse, *Loch na Garr*, towers proudly pre-eminent in the Northern Highlands, near Invercauld. One of our modern tourists mentions it as the highest mountain, perhaps, in Great Britain. Be this as it may, it is certainly one of the most sublime and picturesque amongst our 'Caledonian Alps.' Its appearance is of a dusky hue, but the summit is the seat of eternal snows. Near *Lachin y Gair* I spent some of the early part

of my life, the recollection of which has given birth to these stanzas.

Page 29, col. 2.

'My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid.' This word is erroneously pronounced *plad*: the proper pronunciation (according to the Scotch) is shown by the orthography.

Page 29, col. 2.

'Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding.' I allude here to my maternal ancestors, 'the Gordons,' many of whom fought for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Pretender. This branch was nearly allied by blood, as well as attachment, to the Stuarts. George, the second Earl of Huntley, married the Princess Annabella Stuart, daughter of James I. of Scotland. By her he left four sons: the third, Sir William Gordon, I have the honour to claim as one of my progenitors.

Page 29, col. 2.

'Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden.' Whether any perished in the battle of Culloden, I am not certain; but, as many fell in the insurrection, I have used the name of the principal action, '*pars pro toto*.'

Page 29, col. 2.

'You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar.' A tract of the Highlands so called. There is also a Castle of Braemar.

Page 30, col. 1.

'A Pylades in every friend?' It is hardly necessary to add, that Pylades was the companion of Orestes, and a partner in one of those friendships which, with those of Achilles and Patroclus, Nisus and Euryalus, Damon and Pythias, have been handed down to posterity as remarkable instances of attachments, which in all probability never existed beyond the imagination of the poet, or the page of an historian, or modern novelist.

Page 31, col. 1.

'ELEGY ON NEWSTEAD ABBEY.' As one poem on this subject is already printed, the author had, originally, no intention of inserting the following. It is now added at the particular request of some friends.

Page 31, col. 1.

'Religion's shrine! repentant HENRY's pride!' Henry II. founded Newstead soon after the murder of Thomas à Becket.

Page 31, col. 2.

'No mail-clad serfs, obedient to their lord.' This word is used by Walter Scott, in his poem, 'The Wild Huntsman;' synonymous with vassal.

Page 31, col. 2.

'In grim array the crimson cross demand.' The red cross was the badge of the Crusaders.

Page 31, col. 2.

'Soon as the gloaming spreads her waning shade.' As 'gloaming,' the Scottish word for twilight, is far more poetical, and has been recommended by many eminent literary men, particularly by Dr. Moore in his *Letters to Burns*, I have ventured to use it on account of its harmony.